

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Deb Chroniak 271-1403

SB 213-FN, waiving initial licensure fees for certain applicants for occupational or professional licenses.

Hearing Date: February 8, 2017

Time Opened: 10:16 a.m.

Time Closed: 10:25 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Carson, Reagan, Gannon, Soucy and Woodburn

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill requires that occupational and professional boards and commissions waive the initial license or certification fee for an applicant whose income is less than the federal poverty level.

Sponsors:
Sen. French

Who supports the bill: Senator French, Dist. 7; Bob Blaisdell, New Hampshire Athletic Trainers.

Who opposes the bill: Bill Trombly, Jr., Mechanical Board, Matt Labonte, State Fire Marshal's Office.

Who is neutral on the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator French opened stating this legislation was brought forward on behalf of his constituents who were struggling to better themselves.

- Asking occupational and licensing boards to waive application and licensing fees on initial license if someone falls below the federal poverty lines.
- Believes it is a good idea to remove the state mandate which blocks some of the poorest citizens from working towards a successful career.

Senator Woodburn said this bill could be tailored to those professions which were not high level professions. **Senator French** stated it could be changed, but in the long run we will get those monies when they become successful.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition:

Bill Trombly, Jr., Owner, Bill Trombly Plumbing, Heating and Cooling, Manchester, New Hampshire (in opposition):

- Chairman, New Hampshire Mechanical Board
- Understands what Senator French is trying to do with this legislation, by getting more people into the trades.
- Mechanical Board feels this legislation would hurt their board.
- As a 125 board, their board is supported by their licensees and also give 25% back to the General Fund.
- In running some numbers, he stated that they have had 502 initial gas trainees since July of 2016 and 204 plumbing apprentices.
- Mechanical Board has already lowered the fees for trainees to \$45 per year, or two years for \$90.
- Gas trainees can become fully certified as a gas fitter within a year with job training and schooling.
- They are working to shorten the plumbing apprentice program from a 4 year to a 2 to 3 year program, hoping to get more people in to the trade.
- Many times the gas and plumbing trainees are directly out of high school.
- This legislation could cost the Mechanical Board \$63,000 per year. This could cause them to lay off an inspector or raise fees for other licensees.
- He noted that employers sometimes pick up the cost for training and licensing for trainees.

Senator Woodburn said that the federal poverty rate was just below \$14,000 and how many would be caught by being under this threshold. Mr. Trombly said that a plumbing apprentice or a gas fitter has to work under a master plumber or a gas fitter and it would depend on the person's experience coming in to the business. If it was someone right out of high school and does not know a lot, they never are left alone (which is the law). This can cause you to pay two people, rather than just one person. An apprentice makes about \$10 to \$15 per hour. If they were just starting out they could fall below that threshold. He noted some apprentices are young, and possibly have two to three children, which could definitely cause them to fall below that threshold.

Hearing closed at 10:25 a.m.

Future Action: Pending

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Date Hearing Report completed: February 14, 2017

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