

TESTIMONY
In Support of
House Bill 2741 Before the
Commerce, Labor & Economic Development Committee
February 19, 2018

By Andy Sanchez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer
Kansas AFL-CIO

Thank you Chairman Mason and members of the committee. HB 2741 is aimed at trade certification requirements that most other skilled trades already operate under. The State Fire Marshalls Office would be in charge of administration and already have oversight of the industry. In general, we are supporting the bill for the good of public safety and the industry.

Fire public safety has never been more important than it is right now because as we become more urbanized and commercialized, structures become larger and hold a higher concentration of people underneath one roof. Thus, more people and property are at risk. Fire disasters do kill and it is important to point out, heat and smoke is often more dangerous than flames.

The trade of “Sprinkler Fitter” is a viable and necessary skilled occupation in the construction industry. It is a four to five-year apprenticeship program utilizing a combination of on-the-job training and a certain number of hours of classroom instruction by a trained certified instructor. Apprenticeship training hours are verified through the U.S. Department of Labor as installers advance from apprentice to journeyman.

With so much potential for disasters in our communities and campuses that we have little control over, fires are an example where we can make an impact to help keep the public safe. Emergency preparedness is simply taking methodical steps to avoid a catastrophe. By insuring qualified sprinkler fitter installers we take care of the question: Did we take the necessary precautions to avoid harm to people and prevent property damage? With HB 2741, I believe we are on the right track. Our only concern is with New Section 12 regarding electrical components and the National Electrical Code (NEC). New Section 12, if advanced, may conflict with laws already in place and create some jurisdictional questions with electricians about who should do the work. We believe certified electricians are already doing this work and that should continue. With this minor change, we can offer our wholehearted support for HB 2741. Thank You.