

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers



Local Union 304

3906 N.W. 16th Street Topeka, KS 66618
Tel: (785) 235-2301 • Fax: (785) 235-3342
www.ibew304.org • lu304@ibew304.org

Chartered

Nov. 2, 1933

Before the Committee on Judiciary

Testimony of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 304

In Support of SB 220

Chairwoman Warren, Vice Chair Wilborn, and Members of the Committee:

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 304 (Local 304) appears today in support of SB 220. Local 304 represents over 2100 workers across the state of Kansas who are engaged in various areas of the utility field.

We are in support of this bill because we see firsthand the difficulties that our utility workers face daily. In just the last week we have seen the dedication of our power linemen and natural gas journeymen as they went out in the frigid conditions to make sure light and heat were kept on.

The job these workers do is at its very core a dangerous one. You never know when a slip, a spark, a flash, or any one of a hundred risks or potential disasters will catch up with you.

Added to these naturally inherent risks of the trades, we have seen an increase in attacks on utility workers across the country, to the point that several states, including Missouri, West Virginia, Ohio, New York, and California have passed similar legislation to increase the penalties for battery or assault on a utility worker simply doing their duty. Some of these states have made these assaults imprisonable offenses. We see this as an issue of protecting the lives of all workers who provide a valuable, often critical, service to the public.

Nathan Baker was an employee of East Mississippi Electric Power Association in Clarke County, Mississippi. In 2012, he was working a routine collection/disconnect call when he was shot. His body was dumped in one location and his truck in another.

Zachary Randalls worked for Pacific Gas and Electric in Fresno, California. He was sitting in his truck one day in 2017 when a man walked up and shot him.

Alex Boschert and William Froelich worked for Laclede Gas Co. near St. Louis, Missouri. A few days after Zachary Randalls was killed in California, they were connecting a residential gas line when a man who was upset about his electricity bill murdered them with a shotgun, then turned it on himself.

These are extreme examples, but they happened. These are horrible stories, but they illustrate the risks utility workers face. There are many more. It is just another concern added to their already dangerous profession.

This bill does not call for incarceration, but simply increases the severity level of the current charge. We believe that this is an important step to show our essential workers out there in the field that they have a bit more protection if someone does decide to take out their anger in a physical way.

I thank you for your time today and will stand for any questions the Committee may have.

Sincerely,

David Galvan

IBEW Local 304