



APRIL 1, 2022

Dear Legislator,

The Connecticut Heating & Cooling Contractors Association (“CHCC”) is Connecticut’s premiere, independent, non-profit trade association representing contractors and technicians who work in the heating, ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration, sheet metal and plumbing trades, as well as associated manufacturers, suppliers and dealers. Organized in 1972, CHCC’s mission is to strengthen and further trade relations, attract, educate and train necessary manpower, review and establish quality standards and procedures, all in an effort to serve and grow the HVAC industry in Connecticut.

CHCC seeks to expand and strengthen the current HVAC workforce in Connecticut to provide the staffing needed to fulfill our customer’s demands, a renewed focus on climate control and indoor air quality, and our state’s energy efficiency initiatives. In order to accomplish this, however, we need the legislature to remove barriers to workforce entry and allow contractors to hire additional apprentices by making necessary and appropriate adjustments to the apprenticeship hiring ratios while maintaining the appropriate job site ratio. This would not only provide technical high school students and others seeking to enter the HVAC trades with more learning opportunities, practical experiences, and a solid career pathway, but also ultimately address the current aging-out and future workforce shortages that are looming.

While workforce development remains the top concern in the HVAC trades – again, specifically the need to continue to provide ample training opportunities to potential apprentices by reducing the state’s overly restrictive hiring ratio for the licensed trades – for now, CHCC wanted to take an opportunity to provide you with its perspectives on a few important bills of interest to the association and its members. As you consider various bills between now and the adjournment of the 2022 session, please be mindful of the impacts, positive or negative, the following five issues could have on the HVAC workforce in our state.



PROPOSED LEGISLATION

“Captive Audience” – CHCC Opposes

Senate Bill 163 – An Act Protecting Employee Freedom Of Speech And Conscience

Senate Bill 318 – An Act Concerning Captive Audience Meetings

Simply put, CHCC opposes this legislation because it is unnecessary, overly broad, and complicates workplace communication. This legislation could also unreasonably restrict an employers’ ability to disseminate important information to employees and ultimately work to undermine the merit shop business model.

“Association Health Plans” – CHCC Supports

House Bill 5383 – An Act Concerning Association Health Plans

CHCC supports legislation that would allow Association Health Plans to operate in Connecticut, pursuant to federal law, in order to give our contractor members another option in the marketplace to help address rising health insurance costs. Association Health Plans would allow our HVAC companies, particularly our smaller businesses, to come together and potentially have access to health insurance plans and pricing options that they may not otherwise be able to get on their own.

“HVAC & Schools” – CHCC Supports

House Bill 5476 – An Act Concerning The Provision Of...The Inclusion Of Heating, Ventilating And Air Conditioning Systems In School Building Project Grant Payments

Senate Bill 473 – An Act Improving Indoor Air Quality In Public School Classrooms

House Bill 5479 – An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality In Schools

House Bill 5037 – An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023

Individually, and collectively, these bills represent a major focus on both needed funding and standards to improve HVAC systems and indoor air quality in our state’s schools. CHCC supports this critical investment in both the mechanical infrastructure and the attendant workforce. We want to caution lawmakers, however, to ensure that various technical specifications and climate control mandates as outlined in the legislation are indeed practical and feasible. Additionally, CHCC requests that any new certifications or other requirements neither unduly burden nor favor a particular segment of our existing licensed and qualified workforce.



PROPOSED LEGISLATION

"Fossil Fuel Heat Ban" – CHCC Opposes

Senate Bill 292 – An Act Concerning Heating Efficiency In New Residential Construction And Major Alterations Of Residential Buildings

While CHCC as an organization officially takes a fuel-neutral approach, this legislation as currently drafted seeks to do too much, too soon, by banning fossil fuel combustion appliances as a primary heat and hot water source in new residential construction and for "major" alterations starting with the 2024 building codes. In addition to limiting consumer choice, we also have technical and workforce concerns should this bill move forward in its present form.

"Unemployment Insurance Funding" – CHCC Supports

House Bill 5003 – An Act Concerning The Unemployment Trust Fund

As small employers, CHCC member companies are very concerned about the impact of forthcoming special assessments on employers as a result of the outstanding balance in the state's unemployment insurance trust fund. HVAC companies were deemed "essential" and continued to operate without layoffs or closures during Covid-imposed state restrictions, but in the future they will be facing higher costs per employee. Building off of last year's appropriation of \$155 million in ARPA funds, this crucial legislation would allocate much-needed additional funding to help mitigate the impact on employers of the state's unemployment trust fund debt.

Thank you for your time and attention. As you and your colleagues evaluate these and other important issues this legislative session and beyond, please consider CHCC a resource. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information. We look forward to working with you on these and other issues affecting the HVAC industry in Connecticut.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jenn Jennings".

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stillman Jordan".

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