



FROM THE DESK OF

AAROW ELECTRICAL SOLUTIONS LLC

July 5, 2022

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO BILL 12-22 ELECTRICITY-BOARD OF ELECTRICAL-LICENSES-PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

TO: Council President Alborno and distinguished Members of the Council
From: Atticus Cosgrove, Fire Alarm Superintendent, Aarow Electrical Solutions LLC

Members of the Montgomery County Council, on behalf of the Fire Alarm System Installers of IBEW Local 26, I strongly oppose Bill 12-22: Electricity-Board of Electrical Examiners-License-Permit Requirements. This bill intended to reflect the changes of the new "Maryland Electrician Act" passed by the General Assembly. The bill goes in the wrong direction and seeks to add a "low voltage" license. This "low voltage" license does not fully comprehend the gravity and the intent of the licensed electrician and could ultimately allow unsafe installations with no oversight by properly trained/qualified individuals. I respectfully ask that you oppose this bill.

The work performed by a licensed electrician and a "low voltage worker" can fall under the same umbrella. However, the work can also be very different. A licensed electrician is a highly trained individual that must meet several benchmarks in their path to become fully licensed with the state. An licensed electrician is required to have 3 years of work experience under the supervision of a master electrician, along with 4 years of classroom training. A "low voltage" electrician must not meet any of these requirements, yet under this bill, they would be allowed to work on Fire Alarm Systems under 50 volts. Even for a licensed electrician to work on Fire Alarm Systems, it takes additional training to learn the codes required to install a county/state compliant system. Fire Alarm Systems are also one of the most complex building systems in that they interface with all other building systems. The fire alarm connects and directly controls elevators, HVAC systems, security systems, building emergency generators, nitrogen generators, fire pumps, sprinklers (wet/dry/ANSUL), and lighting controls. All of these components that the fire alarm tie into are considered Life Safety, and if any of these are not connected in accordance with local and national codes, it could mean building damage or loss of life. Many of these systems including the fire alarm system itself contain voltages of 120v -480v which would limit the ability of a "low voltage electrician" to install and stay within the parameters of the new guidelines. Even the speaker circuits used in fire alarm systems are generally 70 volts.

Due to the complex nature of Fire Alarm System installations it might be a better approach to follow the NICET requirements of Fire Alarm installers and inspections, in addition to the state wide electrician license. NICET is the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies and provides certification through testing and work verification, which is based on years of experience in the fire alarm industry. This is the governing body that the federal government uses for assessments of an individual's ability to install a compliant fire alarm system. These credentials apply to residential construction as well as commercial construction. A fire alarm system is only functional if installed correctly and ethically. NICET provides levels of certification starting with a Level 1, which is equivalent to only three months of fire alarm experience up to Level IV, which is equivalent to over 10 years experience.

In conclusion, I ask that Council consider the safety of the residents and buildings of Montgomery County and allow only qualified electricians to perform the "life safety" work. Please join me in opposition to Bill 12-22.

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Fire Alarm Systems, Level IV

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