



HB 3245 A

HB 3245 is a fairly simple bill with a simple goal. It requires that the Department of Corrections assure that all inmates who are working as plumbers or electricians be supervised by an employee of the Department who has a license as either a plumber or electrician.

This corrects, clarifies and stops a current practice of allowing non licensed staff to supervise inmates working in our prisons. The bill does not stop inmate work programs or limit the amount of work inmates can perform. It simply requires that the inmate workers be supervised by staff that has knowledge about the work the inmates are performing. This allows for meaningful education and training of inmates while assuring that qualified staff is overseeing their work performance.

There have been incidents of accidental or purposeful errors made by inmates working unsupervised on electrical and plumbing jobs. Deer Ridge Correctional Institution, in Madras, had to evacuate the entire facility because an inmate work crew "accidentally" dug through the main electrical cable. In another instance at the facility in Barker City an inmate actually wired a boiler to overheat when he bypassed the safety mechanisms in the control panel. Fortunately a licensed staff member discovered and corrected the problem prior to any accident or damage.

This bill serves as a reminder to the DOC that inmates are not generally in their custody for good behavior and well reasoned decision making. Inmates do things at times that make little sense and they can be coerced or blackmailed into doing bad things by other inmates.

HB 3245 A is a common sense bill that continues DOC work projects and protects the resources of the State of Oregon from accidental or purposeful damage when inmates are working on repair or maintenance projects.

AFSCME Council 75 urges your support today and asks you to move it the Senate floor for passage.

Thank you

Mary Botkin
Oregon AFSCME
Lobbyist