

- SUBJECT:** Requiring TDLR to develop a journeyman lineman exam
- COMMITTEE:** Licensing and Administrative Procedures — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Kuempel, Guillen, Frullo, Geren, Hernandez, Herrero, Paddie, S. Thompson
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Goldman
- WITNESSES:** For — Michael Mosteit, Texas State Association of Electrical Workers
- Against — None
- On — Brian Francis, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation;
(*Registered, but did not testify*: Sacha Jacobson)
- BACKGROUND:** Occupations Code, sec. 1305.002 defines "journeyman lineman" as an individual who engages in electrical work involving the maintenance and operation of equipment associated with the transmission and distribution of electricity from its original source to a substation for further distribution.
- The National Electric Safety Code published by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers sets standards for the installation, operation, and maintenance of electric supply, communication lines, and associated equipment.
- DIGEST:** HB 1284 would amend the definition of journeyman lineman and would create a licensing exam for journeymen linemen.
- Under the bill, the definition of journeyman lineman would include individuals who installed equipment associated with the transmission and distribution of electricity, including from a substation to the point where

electricity entered a building or structure on a customer's premises.

The bill would require the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to establish a journeyman lineman examination to test applicants' knowledge of materials and methods used in their work, as well as standards prescribed by the National Electrical Safety Code, the revised version of which the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation would adopt every five years. The commission would adopt rules for these purposes by March 1, 2018.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017, and would apply to examinations administered on or after June 1, 2018.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1284 would create a more valid licensing examination that focused on areas relevant to a journeyman lineman's knowledge, work, and skills. Currently to become a journeyman lineman, individuals take a licensing exam based on the National Electrical Code for electricians, which does not accurately reflect content specifically applicable to the trade. HB 1284 would require the exam to be based on the more relevant National Electrical Safety Code, which would help reduce the failure rate among individuals taking the current journeyman lineman exam.

The bill would protect the public by expanding the pool of specialized linemen permitted to work in the private sector. Although work at a utility is exempt from the licensing requirement under Occupations Code, sec. 1305.003(5), a journeyman lineman must be licensed by passing an electrician's examination to work in the private sector. Few journeymen linemen take and pass the exam because it tests areas in which they do not work. This results in fewer linemen available for private and commercial work, negatively impacting safety, competition, and economic opportunities, because these positions often are filled by electricians who do not specialize in lineman work.

HB 1284 would alter the definition of journeyman lineman to specify that these individuals could work with power lines and other electricity sources up to a structure's point of entry, such as a residential home.

OPPONENTS
SAY: HB 1284 unnecessarily would change licensing regulations for journeymen linemen. A journeyman lineman already can be licensed to do the work through an existing exam, and adding to licensing regulations could increase costs and impede competition.

NOTES: A companion bill, SB 961 by Garcia, was referred to the Senate Committee on Business and Commerce on March 1.