

## Modifying journeyman lineman license and examination

HB 1284 by S. Thompson (Garcia)

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**DIGEST:** HB 1284 would have specified that a journeyman lineman's work included the installation of equipment used to transmit and distribute electricity, as well as work involving equipment associated with moving electricity from a substation to the point where the electricity entered a building or structure. The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) would have been required to use a journeyman lineman examination that tested an applicant's knowledge of materials and methods used in certain aspects of the journeyman lineman's work and the standards prescribed by the National Electrical Safety Code. TDLR would have been required to adopt the revised code after it was published every five years for use in the journeyman lineman's examination.

**GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:** "I vetoed this bill in 2015. The Legislature enacted the exact same bill that was previously vetoed."

**RESPONSE:** **Rep. Senfronia Thompson**, the bill's author, said: "The work the journeyman lineman performs is generally done by an electric company lineman who works for that specific company and works on their company lines. This means these electric company linemen can work without a license as long as they are working for an electric company, co-op, or municipal utility, but not otherwise.

"Journeyman linemen are generally retired electric company linemen who help the non-electric companies after big storms and on unusually large jobs. When the Electrical Licensing Act was passed, it grandfathered persons already doing this type of work. Because company linemen do not work under master electricians, they cannot take the test or receive an electrician license. This is why the journeyman lineman license was created. Far from limiting those who can do this type of work, the journeyman lineman license in fact expands the number of persons who can do this type of work. The journeyman lineman license allows for this important, yet limited, type of electrical work to be performed on electrical equipment located on a customer's property (such as a Coca-Cola production and bottling facility) as opposed to only on the electrical equipment under the exclusive control of an electric utility, power generation company.

"The purpose of HB 1284 was to correct the existing language of the statute that unintentionally excludes lineman from work that is integral to the job of the journeyman lineman. The proposed language made clear that this work is included within the coverage of the license. The original intent of the bill we passed last

session was to allow the lineman's license to cover work from the source of production all the way to the final destination. This is traditional work done by an electric company lineman and should be within the scope of the journeyman lineman license. HB 1284 clarified that intent."

**Sen. Sylvia Garcia**, the Senate sponsor, said: "It appears that the governor has misunderstood the intent and the effect of the bill. Nothing in HB 1284 would prevent any individual practicing their trade from doing so in the future. Nothing in HB 1284 would affect costs or wages. In fact, the only impact of the bill would be to increase economic opportunity for those who are currently inadvertently excluded from aspects of lineman work by virtue of ambiguous language in the original bill (HB 796, 83rd Legislature) creating the license. That is why the final bill, for a second time, had no opposition from utility companies nor from contractors' associations, both union and non-union, in the legislative process."

**NOTES:**

The HRO analysis of [HB 1284](#) appeared in Part Two of the April 26 *Daily Floor Report*.