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Electrical Contractors Association of Greater Boston, Inc. | 106 River Street, West Newton, MA | 1-877-NECA-IBEW (632-2423)

## **NECA Greater Boston Strongly Opposes New Hampshire's Proposed "Right-to-Work" Legislation – House Bill 1677**

**Law would negatively impact economy, safety and responsible employers' ability to compete**

*by Glenn Kingsbury, Executive Manager, NECA Boston Chapter*

WEST NEWTON, February 8, 2012 – The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) of Greater Boston is in strong opposition to New Hampshire House Bill 1677, "An Act Relative to Choice as to Whether to Join a Labor Union." Our organization has over 100 electrical contractor company-members – all business owners and job creators – who in turn employ thousands of workers in well-paying positions throughout New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts.

So-called "right-to-work" laws are economically destructive. According to a 2011 study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), union and non-union workers in right-to-work states annually earn \$1,500 less and often have lesser quality benefits than their counterparts in states without such laws. In Oklahoma, the number of new companies has fallen by one-third and manufacturing jobs have vanished in the 10 years since the state enacted right-to-work.

Because of globalization and harmful free trade agreements, population and economic growth are increasingly unrelated to labor laws. Whereas right-to-work statutes may have indeed attracted companies in the 1980s, corporations typically now find cheap labor in Mexico and overseas. According to EPI, "the right-to-work states of North and South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida have all lost a higher share of their manufacturing sector since the North American Free Trade Agreement than has New Hampshire."

In addition to sapping money from workers' wallets, right-to-work laws make workplaces unsafe. Dr. Roland Zullo, of the University of Michigan's Institute for Research on Labor, Employment and the Economy, found the rates of industry and occupational fatalities are 40 and 34 percent higher, respectively, in right-to-work states. This is unacceptable to NECA contractors, as all strive to complete every job safely and efficiently.

Most importantly, right-to-work laws make it harder for responsible employers – union or not – to compete for business. NECA contractors provide customers with higher quality craftsmanship based on better training and enhanced productivity. All of our New Hampshire electricians and apprentices earn a family-sustaining wage and benefits. Right-to-work threatens this competitive advantage by enabling "low road" contractors to drive wages down and unlevel the playing field.

As an association, we represent employers who have freely chosen to unionize because it was within their best interests. All their workers have absolute freedom to work for a union contractor or find jobs in the "open shop" sector. Furthermore, federal law already protects workers who do not want to join a union as a condition of employment, or from paying for union activities that violate their personal beliefs.

Clearly, House Bill 1677 puts owners, employees and New Hampshire's economy at risk. We respectfully urge Chairman Gary Daniels, the House Committee on Labor, Industrial and Rehabilitative Services, and all NH state legislators to report the bill unfavorably.

To voice your opposition to the proposed legislation, contact your New Hampshire state legislator or Representative Gary Daniels, House Committee on Labor, Industrial & Rehabilitative Services, State House, 107 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301.