

NEWS RELEASE

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers®
AFL-CIO-CLC

900 Seventh St. N.W.
Washington DC 20001



www.ibew.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2022

CONTACT:

Matt Spence 202-728-6014

IBEW Opposes Virginia's Effort to Lower Training Standards

The IBEW released the following statement from President Lonnie Stephenson in response to the Virginia Board of Contractors' vote to lower standards for skilled tradespeople, an action urged by Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin:

"Standards exist for a good reason, and the IBEW is proud to stand for the quality and professionalism that only comes from the rigorous training demanded by registered apprenticeships.

"Lowering the bar for skilled craft labor training would not ease the construction workforce shortage or reduce project costs; in fact, it would have the opposite effect. Using untrained construction workers lowers productivity and substantially increases the likelihood of on-the-job accidents, high turnover, and shoddy workmanship – all of which lead to costly project overruns and delays.

"The IBEW and our employer-partners in the National Electrical Contractors Association are the largest private sector training providers for electrical workers in the United States, jointly operating nearly 300 registered apprenticeship training programs. Together, we invest \$200 million annually in high-quality training with zero cost to participants or taxpayers.

"The IBEW model requires between three and five years to complete an apprenticeship, including classroom training and on-the-job experience (up to 8,000 hours). Rushing the process is an invitation to increasing risk to workers and property.

"We are proud to stand by our mission to develop and standardize education for the members of the IBEW and provide the electrical construction industry with the most highly trained and highly skilled workforce.

"Moreover, the IBEW has long worked with pre-apprenticeship programs across the country to expand opportunities for traditionally underrepresented populations in the construction trades, including women, veterans and people of color. Together with registered apprenticeships, these programs can provide a steady pipeline of highly skilled and trained craft labor needed to complete complex construction projects on time and on budget.

"The IBEW will forcefully oppose any attempt to lower the rigorous training standards that keep our members safe on the job, which would make already dangerous construction jobs even more so and have disastrous effects on project success and quality.

"It is in no one's interest to risk lives in a misguided attempt to increase the number of 'qualified' workers. Instead, the governor of Virginia would be better off focusing on creating more good-paying, highly skilled union jobs for 21st-century Virginians, rather than lowering the bar for low-road contractors to endanger workers and communities."

###

The [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](https://www.ibew.org/) (IBEW) represents 775,000 active and retired members who work in a wide variety of fields, including construction, utilities, manufacturing, telecommunications, broadcasting, railroads and government.