

New Jersey Burglar and Fire Alarm Association

Testimony before the Assembly Regulated Professions Committee

On A-2394

Presented by Richard Trevelise, President, NJBFAA

May 6, 2010

Good afternoon, Chairman Prieto and members of the committee. My name is Rich Trevelise, president of Reliable Safety Systems, Inc. in Howell, New Jersey. I have been in the industry for 26 years and started my business 14 years ago. I was born and raised in the Great State of New Jersey.

I was recently elected president of the New Jersey Burglar and Fire Alarm Association. We are an active association that was started in 1977. Currently we represent almost 300 Fire and Security Alarm companies, manufacturers, and distributors that do business in the State of New Jersey.

NJBFAA strongly supports A-2394 to rectify and address several aspects of the current state licensing laws.

In 2004, the State of New Jersey, with the support of the NJBFAA, established a program in the Division of Consumer Affairs which requires all companies to obtain a license to do business in the Fire and security/alarm industry. Licensed companies must show compliance with the education and training in the latest technologies, as well as pass a rigorous background check.

The licensing program is overseen by the Fire Alarm, Burglar Alarm and Locksmith Advisory Committee, which is under the Board of Electrical contractors.

At present, the law requires all companies that provide Life Safety/Security System and Locksmithing to secure a Business licence to operate in our state. It also requires that key employees, including supervised employees, are background checked, finger printed and maintain a State-provided badge at all times while working.

NJBFAA supports licensors to raise the level of competency in the Fire and Security/Alarm industry, remove potential threats from felons and potential terrorist trying to infiltrate the industry, and strengthen the protections for citizens and businesses.

The licensing laws were put into place several years ago, and we have identified several loopholes in the law that need to be closed.

Specifically, out of State non-licensed contractors circumvent the New Jersey law by hiring a licensed electrician (who had not been licensed as a fire alarm or burglar alarm company, and has not been background checked) to pull cable only and pull the permits. The non-licensed out-of-state contractor can then program, create the database, mount and connect devices and certify the security systems for New Jersey schools, chemical plants, airports, seaports, and residential homes....without having a license under the present law, and without any criminal background checks.

Additionally, contracts are being won by unlicensed out of state contractors to perform in state work. Not only is New Jersey losing financial resources that could be generated by closing that loophole, our citizens are being exposed to unverified and potentially untrained companies servicing and installing security and life safety systems.

As in New York, all licensees should be required to have a physical plant address in the State of New Jersey in order to secure a license, including general and subcontractors. This new bill does that - it requires an out of state business to have a physical presence in the State of New Jersey.

Also, when the licensing law was originally drafted, several new and emerging technologies were not in place. Currently, there are many companies/individuals performing security system work and are operating “under the radar screen” of licensure. A-2394 amends the existing law to require a licensure for:

- a. Computer network professionals and telecommunications professionals or system integrators who provide security systems including video, CCTV and/or access control systems;
- b. Computer network professionals who are installing burglar and fire alarm systems;
- c. Monitoring of burglar/fire alarm systems done through the Internet, bypassing traditional licensing requirements.

A-2394 is needed to clarify which businesses need to be licensed, and require a business office within the State of New Jersey. We ask for your support of this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.