

Greg Whitlow – 22 year Ironworker and 15 year Apprenticeship Instructor

Thank you for allowing me to speak and to voice my support of H.B. No. 127. Passing a welding test means that you've demonstrated that you can make an acceptable weld, in the conditions you will be working in, using the materials and tools you will be using. Your weld in those conditions was good enough to pass an inspection, which can consist of anything from bending it to see if it cracks up to x-raying it. It also means using an accredited facility that follows the rules on testing to assure that a welder takes the test and passes. So many times I've seen facilities accept welding coupons (test plates) by a person, maybe not even the actual welder, and perform the tests to certify welders. Not only is this wrong, but it's extremely dangerous. Testing facilities are basically selling certifications to companies and welders for a fee and not watching the person that actually took the test. Some companies keep welded test plates in the shop to turn in for any welder needing welding certs. Some companies even go as far as to forge a CWI's name and credentials to make copies of welding certificates and give to its employees without even testing.

I've been an Ironworker for almost 22 years and an Apprenticeship Instructor for 15 years. I've been through Apprenticeship School and was taught how to weld. I passed my welding test given to me in the presence of a CWI. I know what Apprentices, welding school students (Hobart), and vocational school students go through to become a certified welder. It's not only unfair to these people to spend the time and money to learn to become certified welders, it's extremely dangerous to us, our families, and our friends to be in the schools, the buildings, and travel the bridges that uncertified welders have welded on that could possibly collapse due to bad welds made by a uncertified welder.

Thank you for your time.