



Written by [Peter Rykowski](#) on April 9, 2024

Minnesota Bills Would Ban DIY Electrical Home Improvements

Members of the Minnesota Legislature are seeking to enact legislation imposing draconian restrictions on the ability of homeowners to make minor electrical improvements to their own homes — a major expansion of government control.

House File No. 3947 ([H.F. 3947](#)) and Senate File No. 3852 ([S.F. 3852](#)) have been respectively introduced by Representative Mike Nelson (D-Brooklyn Park) and Senator Jen McEwen (D-Duluth).



On April 2, the state Senate passed S.F. 3852 by a [34-30 vote](#), sending it to the state House for consideration. As of this writing, it has passed second reading in the House and is awaiting a floor vote.

Among other actions, H.F. 3947 and S.F. 3852 would, if enacted, amend Minnesota law to read:

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An individual who physically performs electrical work on a residential dwelling that is located on a property the individual owns and actually occupies as a residence or owns and will occupy as a residence upon completion of its construction is not required to hold or obtain a license under sections 326B.31 to 326B.399 if the residential dwelling has a separate electrical service utility not shared with any other residential dwelling.

By contrast, current law reads, “An owner shall not be required to hold or obtain a license under sections 326B.31 to 326B.399.”

Although these sections read like legalese, John Phelan of the Center of the American Experiment [explained](#) how this change will impact Minnesotans’ lives:

The key part is “...if the residential dwelling has a separate electrical service utility not shared with any other residential dwelling.” Given that most residential dwellings in Minnesota *do* share electrical service utilities — they are on the grid — that means most Minnesota residential dwellings lose their current exemption. In short, Sen. McEwen’s bill eliminates the licensing exemptions for residential building owners to perform work on their own house. If her bill passes, a homeowner would need to be licensed or get a licensed contractor to change a light switch in their house.

Why would Minnesota lawmakers seek to ban ordinary homeowners from doing minor DIY electrical



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projects in their homes? Phelan provides a likely explanation:

One suggestion arising from the paint bill is that unions are eager to take basic household maintenance tasks like painting your bathroom or changing a light switch, and make it a legal requirement that you have to pay one of their members to do it. This makes as much sense as any other explanation I've heard: the IBEW has long sought to eliminate the ability of homeowners to do any of their own work precisely to drum up work for its members.

By using the force of government to ban homeowners from doing their own home improvements, these unions would artificially create more business for their members.

H.F. 3947 and S.F. 3852 are an extreme infringement on Minnesotans' ability to freely manage their own homes, as well as a gross violation of free-market principles. As the [Declaration of Independence](#) points out, the purpose of government is "to secure [God-given] rights," not to manipulate the economy or regulate citizens' personal lives.

Instead of trying to regulate every conceivable aspect of people's lives, state legislators should focus on upholding [fundamental American principles](#), particularly the ideals enumerated in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Bill of Rights. Accordingly, members of the Minnesota House of Representatives would be wise to reject H.F. 3947 and S.F. 3852.

Minnesota residents can contact their legislators in opposition to H.F. 3947 and S.F. 3852 by visiting [The John Birch Society's legislative alert here](#).



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