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Monroe Professional Engineers Society

A Chapter of the New York State Society of Professional Engineers

657 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14607

Dedicated to Professionalism in Engineering in the Interest of Public Safety and Welfare

2017-18 Officers: President **David Roberts, PE**, President-elect **Chris Kamar, PE**, Vice-President **Arthur Reardon, PE**, Secretary **Martin Gordon, PE**, Treasurer **Michael Ritchie, P.E.**, Membership Chair **Arthur Reardon, PE**

NSPE: Protecting the Engineering License – How?

When asked about the mission of NSPE or its state and local chapters, a common response is that the organization is dedicated to promoting and protecting the engineering license. Specifically, the NSPE mission statement indicates that the organization “protects and enhances the value of licensure and the opportunities for the licensed engineer.”¹ But why does the engineering license require protection and how does NSPE help provide it?

There are two key sources that may threaten the engineering license:

1. Individuals who unethically practice engineering without proper training or credentials;
2. Actions by public entities (e.g. legislative bodies, elected officials, lobbyists, other professional societies) that threaten to undermine the value of the PE license.

The ultimate goal is the “protection of the public health, safety, and welfare above all other considerations” through the “ethical and competent practice of engineering.”¹ A recent example of actions by an individual that threatened the value of engineering licensure, as well as public safety, were those of Paul J. Newman of Troy NY. Mr. Newman fraudulently signed off on over 100 projects, submitting “inspections, field reports, energy compliance certificates, AIA documents, and engineer letters to a number of municipal agencies” all under the false claim that he was “a registered and licensed architect.” Having plead guilty to six felony charges, Mr. Newman now faces two to seven years in prison.²

A recent example of a threat by a public entity was the “model legislation championed by the American Legislative Exchange” which recently sought to eliminate the PE license in Indiana.³ Another threat occurred in Oregon, where a bill was introduced that would “enable commercial interior designers to engage in the practice of engineering.”⁴ Without question, these actions would not only devalue the engineering license, but would simultaneously expose the public to significant risk by unqualified individuals practicing as engineers.

How do NSPE and its chapters work to protect the engineering license from these and similar threats? One means is by keeping the engineering community informed. The legislative action center of NSPE.org reports immediate threats to the engineering license and lets the community know how to help combat these issues. The national and state levels frequently retain lobbyists and legal teams who engage the various public entities when a threat to the engineering license is detected. State and local chapters monitor potential violations of engineering law by individuals and work with government agencies to help protect the public from unlicensed practice.

How can we as individuals help NSPE in its mission to protect the engineering license? First and foremost, stay informed. An excellent resource is the NSPE.org website which includes the *Voter Voice Legislative Action Center* and *Threats to Professional Licensure* interactive map. These resources include the specific bills or actions that are posing a threat and steps we can take to lend our voice in defeating such measures.

Sources:

1. <https://www.nspe.org/membership/nspe-who-we-are-what-we-do/nspe-strategic-plan>.
2. <https://archpaper.com/2017/06/fake-architect-jail/>
3. <https://www.nspe.org/resources/issues-and-advocacy/action-issues/threats-professional-licensure/indiana>
4. <https://www.nspe.org/resources/issues-and-advocacy/latest-news/nspe-oregon-society-oppose-legislation-undermining>

As always, we encourage active membership in the Monroe Professional Engineers Society. We are constantly striving to improve your membership but we always need more help. If you are interested in becoming an active member or have any questions, please email me at dcrobertspe@gmail.com or contact MPES through our website at www.monroepes.org/contactus/.

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