



Feb 21, 2022

Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and
Business Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 1977 "An Act to Require Registration by General Contractors for Home Improvement and Construction"

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and Members of the Committee,

I am Carl Chretien, a residential contractor in southern Maine, a board member of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Maine, as well as a State Rep at the National Association of Home Builders in Washington DC.

Presently, the HBRAME is the only residential builder's association in Maine and we have always been a supporter of the creation of a builder licensing program in the state of Maine. I have personally testified many times over the past 20 years when the topic of builder licensing comes before the legislature. There have been roadblocks through the years to accomplish this goal, but it is accurate to say that our members have served as a valuable resource in this effort.

Today, members of the HBRAME are divided in their support of LD1977. Some welcome the ability to legitimize the craftsman and building scientists who are successfully building in Maine. Some question the purpose of a builder registration program and if it is truly suitable to protect consumers.

The program would certainly develop a database for consumer's to evaluate if a builder has ever previously filed bankruptcy, has any current legal disputes, or if they carry insurance, but is this truly the information needed to protect consumers? LD1977 does not include any enforceable action towards any contractor who does not register in the system, so the benefit to the consumer is quite limited.

As our Association has always argued, a better solution for consumers is a builder licensing program. Plumbers, Electricians, and other specialty vocations are already working within this framework in the State of Maine. Licensing would include an oversight committee who could review those working in the field and take action on any consumer complaints. Licensing would include a required exam to ensure the proper knowledge of current building science. Licensing would also require applicants to submit information for a criminal background check. These are they types of activities that would truly protect consumers who are in need of residential construction services.

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President

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