

Testimony in Support of LD-1929 “An Act to Protect Consumers by Licensing Home Building Contractors”

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and distinguished members of the Committee On Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Deb Violette. Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

I entered into a contract on September 16, 2022, to provide finishing skills to complete a project I had started. I searched the Better Business Bureau and Attorney Generals Office to see if there had been any complaints filed before signing the contract with the person I chose. The contractor insisted I pay 1/3 up front with work to begin the end of September. He dropped off the lumber and October 15th he came to plan the lumber for cut, stain and installation. Upon examining the lumber I found that much of it was cupped, cracked or rotten. The contractor came by one other time and cut a few pieces of the wood for the treads and risers. I questioned the condition of the wood and he told me he was not going to use the rotten part of the wood and additional planing would take care of the cupping. He set up several meetings to work but never showed. On November 16th I texted him telling him that it was apparent that he had no intentions of completing the job and I wanted my money back, please come pick up your things. He made three appointments to do so but never followed through with the commitments. In December I filed a compliant with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and the Attorney Generals Office. The BBB closed the compliant out because the contractor would not return calls or respond to letters and emails. The Attorney General has not even begun to work on my case. I filed a small claims statement with the District Court in Augusta and my hearing was April 10, 2023. I was asked if I wanted an independent mediator to see if we could come to a resolution. I knew that that would be worthless but agreed to try to mediate an agreement.

From that court hearing a judgement was entered into with the contractor but he defaulted on the payment agreement.

If there had been a licensing program that consumers could view to determine who they might call it would have saved me a lot of time, money and heartache. Many states have licensing requirements for home builders. Maine does not. Why? You require plumbers and electricians to

be licensed. Why not home builders? I am a senior citizen living on a fixed income who saved money over the years to complete this project. My experience is just one of thousands of Maine homeowners who have experienced fraudulent behavior.

Please do the right thing and vote ought to pass to protect our senior citizens and others who enter into a written or verbal contract.