



**Testimony of Garrett Mason  
in Opposition to LD 1929  
"An Act to Protect Consumers by Licensing Home Building Contractors"**

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business. My name is Garrett Mason and I'm here on behalf of my client the Associated Builders and Contractors of Maine. On behalf of our 182 members who employ over 2,500 people we are testifying today in opposition to LD 1929.

While we appreciate the concerns of the sponsor, impacted customers, and upstanding contractors we feel the current law is sufficient to address the shortcomings of those contractors who are less than adequate at their job. Currently Maine law requires a contract for repairs over \$3,000 between a consumer and a contractor. There are also safeguards in place to protect from large up front payments. We believe that these measures and others contained within the Home Contractors Law and The Maine Unfair Trade Practices act are sufficient to protect consumers without the need to create new law, a new board, and additional bureaucracy.

We also have a number of concerns about the bill beyond just a licensing requirement. For example, the education requirements listed in the bill are an entry point to a much larger burden that may be difficult for some to meet. Many contractors in Maine have spent years perfecting their craft with on the job training. Will there be classroom time involved for these contractors upon initial licensing? Will continuing education be required? The bill sets a baseline of 6 hours, but then gives the authority to the board for anything beyond that. We have concerns about how that requirement builds over the years. Our members are doing the work of on going training through our own apprenticeship programs and various training programs at our member companies. We are constantly encouraging and providing training for workers everyday.

ABC Maine is also concerned that this new law could create a bottleneck in the construction trades that we have been trying our best to eliminate on all fronts. By instituting a licensing requirement on residential home contractors this bill may create a further shortage of workers than we already have resulting in longer waits for consumers and higher prices to boot. The bill could also discourage people looking to move here from doing so because of such a licensing requirement. We share some of the concerns raised by the Biden Administration on this front when they recommended eliminating unnecessary licensing requirements through an executive order signed in July 2021.

Instead, ABC Maine would suggest a greater emphasis on public education efforts around consumer rights and the responsibilities contractors have to them. Our members do their best

to uphold their end of the bargain under the law, but sometimes consumers just don't know that they have protections. We would much rather see the laws on the books have more publicity before adding any other provisions that could hurt consumers and contractors alike. ABC Maine is happy to sit at the table to find solutions on how industry and government can work together to engage in such a campaign.

We sympathize with those homeowners who have been unfairly taken advantage of. At ABC Maine we strive for excellence in the construction trades and encourage all our members to be the best they can be on the job. However, we don't feel that this bill will solve the problem it's intending to fix. We encourage this committee to vote "ought not to pass" on this bill.

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have or provide answers I do not for the work session.