



81 Northport Dr.

Portland, ME 04103

# Before the Committee on Housing and Economic Development

April 17, 2025

Testimony of Dan Lampariello neither for nor against LD 1226  
“An Act to Protect Consumers by Licensing Residential Building Contractors”

Honorable Senator Curry, Representative Gere and Members of the Joint Standing  
Committee on Housing and Economic Development:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Dan Lampariello and I’m an investigative reporter with WGME CBS13 in Portland, where I work as part of our I-Team. I’m here today not to support or oppose this bill, but to provide context about the issue of contractor fraud and the real impact it continues to have on Mainers.

Each year, our newsroom hears from dozens of people across the state—homeowners who say they’ve paid contractors thousands of dollars for work that was never finished, or never even started. Others tell us about shoddy workmanship that leaves their homes in worse condition than before. Many of these people reach out not because they’re looking for a news story—but because they don’t know where else to turn.

In fact, contractor fraud is the number one consumer complaint our I-Team hears about year after year. And while we always point viewers toward local law enforcement or the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division, we often hear that the matter is considered a *civil* issue—not a criminal one. That leaves many people with no real recourse.

We do our best to educate viewers through our reporting—explaining their rights under the Home Construction Contract Act, urging them to get written contracts, and to never pay more than one-third of the project cost up front. But that education only goes so far. Despite repeated warnings, Mainers continue to fall victim. This is all happening at a time when our state desperately needs more housing, not less. And yet, without meaningful accountability, bad actors are still able to exploit a system that has few protections in place for consumers. Maine is currently one of about a dozen states that does not require any licensing or registration for residential contractors.



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Last year, our team traveled to Vermont to see how their new contractor registry system was working. While it's still early, state officials there told us it's already helping weed out repeat offenders and giving consumers more confidence when choosing a contractor.

I'm not here today to say whether this particular bill before you is the perfect solution. But I can say with confidence that what we're doing now is not working. There is a clear and growing need for better protections for Maine homeowners—and a need to address the regulatory gap that leaves too many people vulnerable.

If helpful to the committee, I'd be happy to share some of the emails and messages we've received from viewers—people who are elderly, on fixed incomes, or struggling with health issues—who now face serious financial hardship because of untrustworthy contractors. However, I think this one quote from a recent victim we interviewed sums up the issue quite well:

***"You ask anyone who's ever built a new house if they would do it again, in this state in particular, and I'll bet you 90% of them would say no. I know I wouldn't, and this was my dream house. I don't know who wouldn't support regulations. They need to start something. There's no reason not to have it."***

Thank you again for the opportunity to share these observations. I urge the committee and the Legislature to take a close look at this issue—and to consider how we can do more to protect consumers in our state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DL' or 'Dan'.

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