

To the Parties Which This May Concern:

I am writing to support Legislative Bill LD 1226 as a resident and home owner in Androscoggin County. I believe this legislation is vital for the protection of home buying consumers because I know the consequences of purchasing a poorly built new construction home first hand. I am in the process of litigating a home purchase on a home that would likely not have been built or saleable if such protection existed at the time I bought my home in June 2023.

Unfortunately, with no requirements for the licensing of building contractors, I have become the victim of someone who claimed (and continues to build and claim) to be a highly skilled craftsman. The listing of the house I purchased included the following description by the realtor, "This home is a real beauty. Meticulously built by XXXXXXXX Construction." After I purchased the home, I began to notice and worry about some issues that came up immediately including leaking plumbing. I contacted the town code enforcement office and found out that the plumbing had not been permitted or inspected upon completion and that there had never been a Certificate of Occupancy issued by the town. I later learned that the electrical permit had been falsified by the builder and a journeyman electrician using a master electrician's name and credentials without his knowledge or consent. The town Code Enforcement office did a walk-through of the property and informed me that it was a poorly built structure with many concerns including numerous code violations as well as general safety issues. It was at this point that I realized that anyone could hang a sign outside their door, claim to be a builder, charge hundreds of thousands of dollars for their wares on the most expensive purchase a person typically makes in their lifetime, and have zero qualifications that entitles them to such a claim.

Once I hired a lawyer to help me litigate the property with hopes for some compensation for repairs needed to gain a COO and a safe home, the real trouble began. We hired Lincoln & Haney Structural Engineers to do a structural inspection. The following is an excerpt of the inspector's affidavit of what he found:

"7. At the preliminary walkthrough, I noted several areas of the XXXX Property that required immediate attention as they posed significant safety concerns as they were structurally unsound. These areas included but were not limited to the front porch, back porch, cantilevered roof over the front porch, and garage header. I worked closely with Senecal Construction Services to temporarily add support to those areas. Those temporary repairs which were completed by early December of 2023.

8. In early November of 2023, the identified drywall was removed by Senecal Construction Services, and the home was further prepared for my structural evaluation which was scheduled for November 14, 2023.

9. On November 14, 2023, I conducted my official evaluation of the XXXX Property. A team from Senecal Construction Services was present for this evaluation.

10. On January 19, 2024, I issued a ten (10) page structural evaluation of the XXXXXX Property which included framing sketches. Those documents have been attached as Exhibit B.

1. It is my professional opinion that the XXXX Property as it currently stands is significantly non-code compliant in several areas, largely does not meet the standard of care in the industry for home building in Maine, and has some potentially dangerous conditions which pose a serious risk of bodily harm.”

I was devastated to learn that the repair estimate for my home in 2023 was over \$500,000, more than I spent on purchasing it. I have since endured extreme financial stress including attorney fees, renting a home instead of living in the one I own, and other professional expenses. My house is still in litigation as of April 16, 2025 with no word yet from the court as to whether or not my case will even be heard or dismissed as the defendants (the builders, realtor, building inspector) have asked for. I consider myself to be incredibly fortunate to be able to wait this out through the courts but I worry for most people who use their every resource to purchase a home and would be subject to all I have experienced without the ability to fight for compensatory damages.

Professionals of all varieties require licensing as I did as a teacher. It is not fathomable to me that home consumers have to put all their faith in “trust” and their own due diligence rather than the requirements for home builders to meet rigorous standards, with a minimum being licensing. I would be happy to address this issue further with anyone who has questions and I will remain a strong advocate in the future for bills such as LD1226 that protect consumers from disastrous outcomes such as mine.

Thank you for reading my testimony.