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Testimony for LD 195
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I would like to explain why I support LD 195. My wife and I hired a local contractor, Yankee Home Improvement, to remodel our family camp on Lake Wesserunsett in Madison on 2009. He was a local person who had roots in the community. He was friendly, charming and had a lot of good ideas. My wife and I lived in southern New Hampshire at the time. We would exchange phone calls and emails almost daily during the project. We would also come visit the premises every few weeks. The contractor, Peter Tewksbury, had a minor accident on the site. He was prescribed painkillers as part of the treatment. Mr. Tewksbury kept sending us updates and invoices during this time. The next time we came up to visit we found that additional work had not been done. Work that we had paid for. During that visit Tewksbury admitted that he had taken money and not done the work. He told me he had buddies that owed him favors and it would get done. I later learned that he had a meeting with his bank the next day and was also in default on his home mortgage. He stopped returning my calls and did not respond to emails. After repeated attempts to reach him we consulted with a lawyer and were advised to send a "stop work" order to Tewksbury. I contacted Madison PD and they investigated and even interviewed Tewksbury. He told the police sergeant that we had "more money than God" and he wasn't going to talk to them anymore. The officer from Madison PD wrote a report submitted to the District Attorneys office that recommended prosecution of Tewksbury. The DA declined to prosecute stating that it was very difficult to show that the contractor intended to defraud us. I was referred to the civil justice system to sue in court for relief. Tewksbury filed for and was granted bankruptcy relief by the court. This person is still employed as a contractor in my area to this day. I also learned that he had also defrauded the electrical contractor who was hired by Tewksbury for my project. We spent over \$30,000 to complete the work that we had paid Tewksbury for

In May of 2018 my wife and I were looking to have our old two car garage replaced. One of three that we interviewed was Phillip LaMantia of LaMantia Contruction, Incorporated. His name was given to us by a representative of Hammond Lumber Company in Skowhegan. He made an excellent presentation. He had a professional looking flyer with pictures that led the customer to believe that it was his work. He stated that other contractors in the area didn't like him because he charged less than others. LaMantia stated that my neighbors would be very impressed because he would build us the "best garage ever." He also stated that he had built a little league ballpark in Waterville. I visited the site. His family name was displayed and it was a great looking facility. He also told us

that he had crews in Bangor and Portland working on jobs. We hired Mr. LaMantia, signed his contract and gave him the first of multiple payments. Problems and issues started shortly after the job started. A cement block foundation wall was crooked and had to be torn out. LaMantia had disagreements with the Madison Code Enforcement Officer. He said she was new and that he didn't have time to train her. The cement slab was poured and it wasn't level. There were bumps and imperfections. LaMantia said he would fix it at the end of the project. Code enforcement came out again toward the end of the project. She found multiple issues with the quality and correctness of his work. The code enforcement person said the garage had so many issues that she would not approve the work if it had been an occupied dwelling. LaMantia said he knew someone in Augusta who would overrule her and it would all be worked out. The Madison CEO returned to the worksite with a Selectman from Madison who is also an area contractor. He agreed that there were many serious issues with the work. The Madison CEO wrote a letter to me stating the numerous issues. I gave a copy of the letter to our contractor. Again he told me he knew someone in Augusta and it would "get kicked." Two days later I received a certified letter from LaMantia. This was a "special invoice" stating that we owed him over \$11,000 in special charges for additional costs involved in the work. We had to hire an attorney who sent a letter to LaMantia advising him not to file a mechanics lien on our property. LaMantia filed for bankruptcy. We then found out that LaMantia had defrauded a couple from Winterport the previous year. Their story was very similar to our situation. We had to have that garage torn down. The foundation was off by 9 inches from one corner to the other. Another local contractor who looked at the garage before it was torn down said it was the worst example he had ever seen. The manager for the Skowhegan Hammond location viewed LaMantia's work also. As a result LaMantia's business cards are no longer displayed in that store. LaMantia ordered excess materials during our construction and would return the extra for credit on his account. My wife and I never got credit for these returns. We were not able to get copies of the invoices and credits because they were in LaMantia's name. He also charged us for material from the Winterport job the year before. He also had let his insurance lapse and was no longer incorporated. The new contractor we hired told me that he would prefer that Maine have a licensing requirement for contractors because the bad ones give him adverse reputation.

If I need to hire an electrician or plumber in Maine these trades have licensing requirements. There are no such requirements in Maine. I support LD 195. Thank you very much.