



Pennsylvania Association of Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors Inc.

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Before The
Professional Licensure Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Public Hearing Regarding

House Bill #1357

State Licensure of Plumbers

Testimony Of

Michael McGraw Sr

Executive Director

Pennsylvania Association of Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors

(PA PHCC)

Dear Chairwoman Harhart and Chairman Readshaw and the members of the Professional Licensure Committee:

My name is Michael McGraw and I am the Executive Director for the Pennsylvania Association of Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors (PA PHCC). I am also a Master Plumber. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide you with my testimony in support of HB 1357.

As you will hear today and from other written testimonies submitted to this committee, there are many reasons and they are all reasons which only make sense that this be legislation in the Commonwealth. First and most important reason Plumbing Contractors should be required to have a license to provide plumbing services to the consumers of this commonwealth is to protect the health, safety, comfort and environment of Pennsylvanians and the millions of visitors each year who come to PA because of its history. Safe drinking water and proper disposal of sanitary waste cannot be provided by the average person. I am sure that in your professions there are many variables and extended education needed to hold the title's that you have and the average person would not know those variables. Sure, some people decide to represent themselves in the court of law, do their own taxes, work on their own vehicles and cut their own hair. But that does not make them lawyers, accountants, auto mechanics or beauticians. Why, because in Pennsylvania you cannot provide these services without having received a degree or license that says you are qualified to provide them. Plumbing is no different, the average person may be able to repair certain plumbing problems but ask that same person how many fixture units can my house sewer handle, what is the maximum temperature a water heater can deliver hot water at my faucet before requiring a mixing valve or what is the maximum distance for a trap arm before you need a vent, what is the difference between a vent stack and a stack vent. Just as in your professions they would not know the answers because these people have not been properly trained and educated on the safe installation and operation of an entire plumbing system. Plumbing installed incorrectly can injure, sicken and even kill people. The plumber's motto since 1883 is "The Plumber Protects the Health of the Nation".

Pennsylvania borders New York, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and Delaware. Only one of these states do not require a plumbing license. Out of State plumbing contractors cross the bridges and state lines into Pennsylvania and are bidding on and doing work in our state. They are taking jobs away from Pennsylvania contractors who do not have the same ability to cross those bridges and state lines to bid on and work in those states because they will not recognize a Pennsylvania Plumbing Contractor as a qualified and professional contractor because they do not possess a Pennsylvania State Plumbing License. Doesn't seem fair does it? This is not a level playing field. With a state plumbing license we would have the ability to refuse out of state contractors if that state did not reciprocate with us. Don't we want our contractors to be given the same opportunity across state lines that Pennsylvania gives out of state plumbing contractors in PA.?

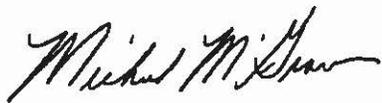
This legislation, once enacted would generate an estimated \$2,000,000.00 every year in additional revenue to the Commonwealth of PA. We are only asking for an \$85,000 appropriation which would pay itself back in the first year of enforcement.

This legislation may be new to some of you and it is not so new to many of you sitting up there. This legislation has been around the last (5) legislative sessions, that is ten years. In those ten years the Plumbing industry has met with and sent many letters to Senators and Representatives seeking support of Statewide

Licensure for Plumbing Contractors. We have met with many special interest groups over those ten years and have amended language, went from a "Practice Act" to a "Title Act", extended effective dates and expanded the "grandfather Clause". As all of you know, ABC, the "Associated Building Contractors of PA are our biggest opponents to this legislation and will testify today again in opposition. I would just like it to be made public that we have met behind closed doors over 30 times in the last ten years with representatives from ABC and the Plumbing Industry and each time we have addressed their concerns at that time with this legislation. Even as late as October 2015, and both groups agreed that this legislation was good. Only to have ABC recall their position again. Each time we meet they have a different concern or reword a previous concern. We are at a point that we cannot waste any more time negotiating with ABC as we feel as they will never agree to this legislation. It is no secret that ABC opposes Labor Organizations. I represent all open shop plumbing contractors. We do not agree with all labor policies and labor does not agree with all our policies but when there is something that we both agree on which will benefit all our contractors and more importantly as I mentioned before, protect you, your families and the rest of the commonwealth we come together and lobby together. I ask that you would support this legislation for all the right reasons, not because you are a republican, a democrat, labor friendly or not labor friendly but based on the facts presented before you here today!

Thank you for allowing me to present my testimony in support of HB1357.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McGraw Sr." in a cursive script.

Michael McGraw Sr.