

Chair Harhart, Representative Kortz, Representative Helm and Members of the Committee:

My name is Barbara Perilstein and I live in Wyomissing, Berks County, Pennsylvania.

Thank you SO much for allowing me to tell you my story and why House Bill 1421 is important to me.

In 2014, my husband and I dreamt of retiring and moving from Berks County to Montgomery County so that we could be in an over 55 community near our children and grandchildren.

When we finally found what we thought was a very nice property, we asked our realtor to recommend the best inspector in the area. The inspector who was recommended was the owner of a "Pillar To Post" franchise and he stated that he had lots of experience in home inspections. We hired this person to perform a pre-purchase home inspection. In particular, we were concerned that there was a musty smell in the foyer. We were told by both our realtor and the sellers' that there was nothing to be concerned about, as the owner was in Florida for the entire winter. We then expressed this same concern to the inspector who put our fears to rest. He stated that it was a lovely property, with only minor repairs needed.

After we completed settlement on the purchase, we went directly to the house to meet a contractor about upgrading the kitchen. Our first question to him was "can we put a gas stove in place of the electric one?". Before going any further, the contractor stated "let me check the basement to see if there is a gas line". When he was on about the third or fourth step on his way down to the basement, he stopped and said "forget the stove, forget the kitchen, you have a major problem here". He told us that there was black mold 360 degrees within the basement walls. We immediately called the title company (it was one half hour after settlement!) to see if we could cancel the purchase.

"Absolutely not" was the answer. We then called the inspector and, after five long hours, he came to the property. He took a test for the presence of mold and the results were unequivocal. It showed the highest level of mold possible. We contacted our insurance company who stated that it was a pre-existing condition and nothing would be covered. At our expense, we remediated the entire area, knocking down all the walls, etc. We had many additional contractors come to the property to put the basement back together after the remediation and all asked "who was your inspector?" In addition, they found many other structural problems. We now had fears about possible future mold, as our grandson is highly allergic, and further concerns about the structural integrity of the

property. Upon rebuilding the basement, we put the house up for sale at a much reduced price. We never moved into the house and we sold it at a VERY substantial loss.

We sued the inspector, and after a year and a half, with many legal bills, we withdrew the case as it was going nowhere and had become cost prohibitive. Had we had a competent inspector, we would have NEVER purchased the property. Our lawyer said that in Pennsylvania, when you purchase real estate, it's "buyer beware!" He added: "Too bad you didn't buy in New Jersey".

Why does our state jeopardize its constituents? Should we not be protected like the citizens in our neighboring states who HAVE mandated license requirements for home inspectors? This includes New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and many, many, many other states. These requirements include a 140 hour course plus a test and continuing education. In addition, there is a grace period in some states which allow you to rescind on a home purchase, if justifiable. It is essential that prospective buyers be able to rely upon the professionalism and competence of people and firms who present themselves as experts in home inspections. These standards can only be met by passing House Bill 1421.

Our experience is not unique. We believe that there are many unqualified home inspectors in our state, as we have learned from others upon telling them our story. Hairdressers have to be licensed, as well as auctioneers, massage therapists, vehicle salespersons, etc., etc., etc. Surely, when you make the biggest purchase of your life, you want someone competent, someone you can trust to assist you in evaluating the situation. All this can be accomplished without any additional state funds because the license fee will be self-sustaining.

I implore you to be so kind as to address this issue so our citizens can have piece of mind when purchasing a home.

I hope you will vote to move House Bill 1421 forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Barbara And Michael Perilstein