

## Testimony of Dr. Terrie Lewine

before the Housing and Community Development Committee

PA House of Representatives

Impacted Resident

August 30, 2023

I bought a property in 2014. Pulled together a team of professionals including a city 'approved' General Contractor. We pulled all the permits required to get started and the work began. Very long story short, what happened in my project was that I sent someone up to assess building the decks on my property. He called me after hanging around for a few days insisting I drop everything and come to the property because it was a disaster. Which it was. My structural engineer was immediately called along with the architect, the new contractor to assess the situation. It turned out that the small additional foundation was not installed and all the framing was not attached property to the existing building. None of the inspections that were called for happened. All the framing had to come down, which in my case was quite expensive because the subfloors were specially ordered (called Warmboard) that were required for my heating system. While the GC tried to argue that it all wasn't true, I'm not sure how he had the guts to say that, because it was obvious, even to me a lay person who never built or renovated a house, that there were cinderblocks.

The framer was nowhere to be found and my lawyer brokered a deal between me and the GC. In the end this cost me about \$50,000 to \$60,000. I consider myself lucky because the new GC stepped right in and happened to be honest and skilled and my renovation was completed.

The problem here is that I had little options to recoup the money I was swindled out of. Suing was ill-advised because even if I won the case (costing thousands of dollars) the possibility of me receiving the funds was minimal.

The companies that I originally hired were free to move on to another job, having the money I paid to them for work that was not completed on my project without any responsibility for their actions. All that is required to become a General Contractor in the city of Philadelphia is that their taxes are paid to date. There was no system for accountability or even skills to do the work required to become a GC here.

As a professional myself, I am required to take boards to be able to get a license, and take continuing education courses and tests every other year to maintain my license.

I believe it should be the same for those in the building trades.

Thank you.