



PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE HEARING

June 12, 2023

*Testimony Provided By:
Andre Del Valle
Vice President of Government Affairs
Pennsylvania Apartment Association*



PA House: Professional Licensure Hearing
Re: House Bill 390
June 12, 2023

Good morning, Chairman Burns and members of the Professional Licensure Committee my name is Andre Del Valle and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Pennsylvania Apartment Association representing 285,000 units and 300 property management companies across the Commonwealth.

We are reaching out today to share concerns with HB390 which would establish the State Board of Plumbing Contractors and provide for plumber and plumbing contractors licensure. The Pennsylvania Apartment Association and its members work closely with several elected officials on a number of bills that impact our industry to not only keep our residents safe but keep our units affordable. This bill we believe would create a process that would add costs to owners by raising the costs through the requirement of a licensed plumber.

Most of our buildings have on-site trained maintenance workers and the creation of a board raises concerns in the duties and powers that could require maintenance workers to not be able to do on-site repairs throughout our buildings which they have been trained to do under other types of certifications. In the event of an emergency we rely on our maintenance teams to quickly address and rectify an issue, however with this legislation we would be forced to find a licensed plumber and outsource the repairs, which could be the difference of a leak in a building only impacting one unit, to it flooding multiple floors costing us thousands of dollars and in turn increasing the costs of rent across the building.

While we appreciate the spirit of the bill to ensure certified plumbers are conducting the work across the Commonwealth, however we don't believe there's a widespread or multitude of issues within the plumbing industry that would justify the creation of the board, as the industry already follows OSHA and other associated rules. The board, if created, would also have tremendous ambiguity and discretion to revoke a license if they believe an individual has a dependency on alcohol or may be suffering with a mental health issue under the boards "probable cause" requirement to submit to an evaluator. This leads to a number of concerns of who could be the evaluator, would the board have the discretion to choose, or would there be a government department who is independent from the board to be the evaluator. There is already an ongoing shortage of plumbers in PA and this bill will make entry into the plumbing trade even harder.

We hear across the Commonwealth that affordability and a shortage of housing is critical, and at the Pennsylvania Apartment Association we are working to address and find innovative solutions to address those challenges, however we believe bills like this could lead to a decrease in safe and affordable units due to increased costs. We would welcome any opportunity to work with this committee and all sponsors to find innovative solutions that don't come at owner's expense.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments today.