

Dear Chairman Doyle, Chairman Baram and members of the General Law Committee. I am sorry I was unable to attend the public hearing today. I am submitting my testimony in writing in support of HB 5149 An Act Concerning Testing and Licensing of Home Improvement Contractors.

I had a terrible experience with the re-building of my house. There are a number of things the contractor did wrong: 1) he wanted to charge me for the double lavatory in my master bath which was already part of the plan, and the one he installed was a second; there is a big gash at the rim of the second bowl telling me he installed a second and charged us for new; 2) The original contract and specs which we discussed several times with him called for Radiantec radiant heat and air conditioning. The Radiantec hot water heater was supposed to be a 55 gallon tank; he installed a 35 gallon tank (pocketed the cost between the two), used sub-standard tubing and no heat deflectors like he should have and charged us for a system we didn't want that doesn't work properly; Oh, and we were charged for A/C but didn't get it. He used sub-standard wood to construct our deck and arbitrarily decided to make the deck 14' x 29' instead of the 16' x 42' it was supposed to be yet he charged me the same price-\$11,000. The wood is inferior with printing on many of the railings and warps in many of the balusters. He failed to anchor the deck supports properly to the cement pilings, using a block of wood under the support and on top of the concrete piling instead of the accepted standard metal grip anchor. All throughout the house, the taping is letting go on the cathedral ceilings in the family room and living room; nails are popping out visibly everywhere (and that was true from day one when we moved into the house). In short he took our money, charged us for first-rate materials and gave us junk. Our living room fireplace was supposed to be vented with a blower and an ignition switch on the wall. He gave us an unvented fireplace, no blower, and no switch. He used the 4-pane bow window we had previously in our house that was razed, but because he left it thrown on the front lawn during the winter of 2004, the seal broke on one of the thermal panes, and I now have a cloudy window. He cannot read a blueprint because he certainly didn't follow the one we gave him. The blueprint called for a sky light in the living room; we did not get one. In fact, we almost didn't get the two in our family room even though they were in the blueprint. I can go on and on, but what is essential is that he is, by trade, a stone mason, not a contractor, something we were unaware of when we hired him; he told us he was a licensed contractor in CT. Not only did he misrepresent himself, but he took all of our money, did not give us what we had called for in our blueprint, and wanted \$50,000 more besides, this despite the fact that he has a CT license! He also made the mistake of trying to steal a kitchen cabinet from me before it was installed because he "didn't know" where it was supposed to go, despite the blueprint. He's a disaster—a "licensed" by- the- State- of- Connecticut disaster, and Consumer Protection was my only hope of getting him "to make good"; I couldn't sue him because he was or is a limited liability company; we couldn't get a summary judgment; As I told you earlier, the only way we were to get him to drop the law suit was to pay \$500 for a structural engineer who told us the house, as built by Saunders, is not structurally sound. Another 30" of snow and 60MPH winds might find us without a house. All anyone from the court would have to do is come to my house and see for themselves what a horrible contractor he is. He was the third contractor we had met with so we did shop around, and he was recommended by a "friend"

I don't know what else to tell you, but if the state is going to "license" contractors, the supposed contractor needs to pass a battery of tests to prove they are, in fact, a contractor. Also, there must be a law or some way to hold them accountable for shoddy workmanship and fraud when they commit it. Lord knows he took all of our money and then some and still wanted more!

Sincerely,
Andrea Paddock, Monroe, CT