

Baybrook Remodelers, Inc.



February 18, 2013

My name is Ken Carney and I own Baybrook Remodelers Inc. I hoped to speak my thoughts directly to the committee however; I am in Florida on a family vacation.

Baybrook Remodelers specializes in residential additions, kitchen, bathrooms, decks, siding, roofing, windows and general remodeling. I employ 42 tradesmen and support 8 primary subcontractors. I started my company Baybrook Remodelers in 1992 at the age of 22. Ninety five percent of my work is referral based. I have been able to provide a retirement plan and health benefits to my employees. I have never missed a payroll and my company continues to grow each year. I do not have the skills that my trades people have, but I do have a very good business sense and I am able to make sure that contracts and rules are followed and enforced. I have been able to build my business by providing excellent customer service and by providing my employees a great living and work environment. If licensing the individual trades were a law in 1992 I would not be in business today. If HB5149 passes, I am pretty sure I will be forced out of business.

It has been my experience that the public is best served by a home improvement company that provides multiple people with different skills. Baybrook Remodelers employs estimators, sales people, project managers and tradesmen. Most of the issues concerning the home improvement industry in CT are the result of poor business practices not shoddy workmanship. The home improvement industry needs more people who specialize in running a business. A trade licensing law will keep people like me out of the home improvement business.

The supporters of HB5149 claim that licensing the trades will allow more people to start out in business and it will provide protection to the public. The supporters of HB5149 have not considered the fact that most complaints in our industry are the result of poor business practices. Testing and licensing a contractor will not make him a better businessperson. The public will suffer if all business people are kept out of the contracting business as a result of HB5149. The supporters have not considered that not all trades people want to be in their own business. Working in a particular trade 8 hours a day is far more attractive to most then running a home improvement business. Most contractors cannot effectively estimate jobs, sell jobs, pull permits, order materials, follow all the state and federal rules and work in the field all day. The supporters of HB5149 have not considered the trades' people who do not speak English or the people who simply do not do well with testing and paperwork. These people will not attempt to be licensed and the pool of available quality trades people will shrink.

Some people claim that licensing works just look at the plumbers, electricians and HVAC trades. What they do not realize is that these trades are supported by a system of education, training and product manufacturers. The manufacturer of a boiler has a real interest in the proper installation of their boilers because of the liability issues that arise if the product fails or catches fire. The manufacturers of paint or sheetrock ship their products with little liability. The need for a strong relationship with the installer just does not exist.

If HB5149 passes it will have unintended consequences that will hurt the public, increase the price of labor, alienate a percentage of existing contractors, terminate the business of some contractors and bar everyone from the contracting business who does not have the skill to work in the field.

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