



From the desk of Melissa Sheffy  
[Melissa@network-interiors.com](mailto:Melissa@network-interiors.com)  
860-793-1188 x15

Testimony for Public Hearing  
General Law Committee  
March 11, 2014

Melissa C Sheffy  
401 Rockwood Drive  
Southington, CT 06489

### **Raised Bill No: 412 – An Act Concerning the Enforcement of Certain Occupational Licensing Statutes**

Good Afternoon Senator Doyle, Representative Baram and General Law Committee, My name is Melissa Sheffy and I am the owner of a small open shop commercial contracting firm that specializes in metal framing, drywall and small general contracting projects. In addition to managing my business, I volunteer as a member of the Building Committee for the Southington Middle School projects, am Chair of the Board of the Construction Education Center focusing on apprenticeship training within the construction industry, and President of the Board of Directors of the Southington Cheshire YMCA. Why I am interested in SB 412 is my role as a Public Member of the State Plumbing and Pipe Work Board.

As a Public Member of the Plumbing Board since October 2007, I am a steadfast advocate for making sure that plumbing be done by CT licensed plumbers, who hold either a P1 or P2 license issued by the CT Department of Consumer Protection (DCP). Connecticut's plumbing licensing requirement provides safety, not only for the individual plumber, but for all CT citizens. The classroom and on-the-job training standards behind a CT P1 or P2 license assures a well-trained plumber.

As a business owner who strives to adhere to CT's rules and regulations, I was surprised to learn during my service on the Plumbing Board that the CT DCP's efforts to enforce occupational trade licensing standards are minimal. The Plumbing Board receives a report of recent enforcement actions and notices of violations issued by the DCP. It is a very short enforcement report with few violations noted or fined. When I've asked why the fines are so minimal, I was told that the DCP did not want to issue a fine that is so high it cannot be paid. In reality, such an enforcement policy is counterproductive to the legitimate businesses and a slap on the wrist to violators.

To be clear, I don't have specific first hand knowledge of how the DCP inspections work. What I do have firsthand knowledge of is sitting at monthly Plumbing Board meetings where we enforce the licensing laws but with minimal fines issued to violators through the DCP's Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVC). I mean no disrespect to the Department which is understaffed. To assist the DCP's inspectors, I respectfully request that you pass this legislation in the interest of public safety and by doing so will allow all of the CT Occupational Licensing Boards to assist DCP in keeping the citizens of CT safe. The majority of the Occupational Licensing Boards are made up of professional license holders of their specific trade and represent the professionals in their trade.

Let me be clear on what we hope to accomplish with this bill:

- Keeping the general public safe.
- Ensuring that individuals and contractors work within their license descriptions that have gone through the proper apprenticeship training, testing and continuing education classes to make sure they are current with the latest laws and procedures.
- Stopping individuals and companies from performing work outside of their license description therefore putting the public at risk.
- There are family owned and operated businesses that employ family members for years without putting them through the proper apprenticeship, licensing and continuing education classes. This has to stop.

- Since we are a state with such close proximity to surrounding states, we have out-of-state tradespeople working in CT that have not gone through the same schooling, apprenticeship and testing that our CT plumbers are required to do.
- Since I've been on the Plumbing and Pipe Work Board there have been multiple properties with gas explosions resulting in injuries and fatalities.
- This bill is intended to stop the violators of the current license requirements to keep the CT public safe.
- Passing this legislation will reinforce current legislation that the local building officials may assist DCP inspectors as well as allowing the Occupational Licensing Boards the ability to help investigate.
- This legislation will assist the DCP with enforcement while adding no additional expenses to their budget.
- The fines levied will be shared with the municipality and the state.

Let me be clear about what this legislation is **not** intended for:

- Blurring lines of trade jurisdiction and stopping work on construction projects and waiting for a board meeting to settle a jurisdictional dispute.
- Broadening license descriptions to encompass non-licensed trade's scope of work.
- For this reason, I ask that the following proposed language be included as it was proposed: "and such violation is not determined to be a bona fide dispute between persons engaged in any trade or craft as described in subsection (a) of this section".

I respectfully ask that you consider the safety of the general public and allow the CT Occupational Licensing Boards to help the DCP with hearings and enforcement. By doing so, you will be taking a step toward protecting the public when they turn on their lights, faucets, furnace and/or gas fireplaces, step onto an elevator, ensure a building's fire protection system works in the event of a fire and more.

Living in Southington makes me a constituent of Representative Aresimowicz, Representative Zoni, Representative Adinolfi, Representative Sampson and Senator Joe Markley. I would like to formally thank them for their time and interest in this important matter of Public Safety and am fortunate to have accessible legislators that listen to the issues and care about the safety of the citizens of CT. I would especially like to thank Representative Aresimowicz and his staff for making themselves accessible to my questions and comments.

I will be out of town on Tuesday and unable to attend this important hearing so I'm submitting my written testimony in my absence.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Melissa Sheffy