

MEMORANDUM

To: Ohio House Economic Development, Commerce and Labor Committee
From: Marvin Cochran, President, Mid-States Roofing Conference
Date: December 5, 2017

Re: Proponent Testimony HB 164

Chairman Young / Vice-Chair DeVitis/ Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan:

My name is Marvin Cochran and I serve as the Business Manager of Roofers Local 86 and represent over 200 active members and retirees. Additionally, I serve as President with the Mid-States Roofing Conference which represents approximately over 2,200 members in Ohio. I am also a member of ACT Ohio.

I am submitting this written testimony to the committee today to express my enthusiastic support of HB 164. Because of the lack of licensure in the roofing industry, there are very serious quality issues within the industry and systemic employment fraud with independent contractor abuse.

Far too often, I've seen contractors with little to no experience be awarded commercial roofing projects with disastrous results for the customer. In the Central Ohio region alone, I'm personally aware of several school districts that have had to spend millions of dollars in repairs to their roofing systems only years after the initial construction cost. Roofers unions across the state report similar incidents costing taxpayers potentially millions due to poor workmanship.

Because of the lack of licensure in the roofing industry, it's difficult for a school district or other public owners to determine the good contractors from the bad. HB 164 puts in place a modest licensing system to ensure roofing contractors meet some minimum standards of competency. Under the requirements of the bill, a roofing contractor must hold or be assigned a license from the Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board (OCILB). The OCILB has provided licensing to various crafts in the construction industry for over 20 years and I believe is well suited to do the same for the roofing industry.

Under the requirements of HB 164 a roofing contractor applicant must meet several basic requirements, including having experience in the industry and proof of liability insurance, and pass an examination by the OCILB. Again, while these licensing requirements are basic in nature, they will go a long way to ensure contractors have a minimum level of competency.

The roofing industry has been ripe with independent contractor abuse for decades. All too often unscrupulous contractors wrongfully classify their employees as independent contractors, simply to avoid paying their fair share into the workers compensation, unemployment compensation fund, and other taxes. OCILB licensure will help crack down on these abuses.

HB 164 is also supported by the roofing industry contractors. The Ohio Roofing Contractors Association (ORCA), which represents both union and non-union roofing contractors, supports this legislation. The ORCA support of this legislation demonstrates that the industry itself is eager for licensing requirements.

In conclusion, HB 164 will help raise industry quality, address independent contractor abuse, and is supported by both workers and employers. Accordingly, I urge your support for HB 164. Thank you for your consideration.