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**Senate Government Oversight Committee
Senate Bill 238 — Sponsor Testimony
May 22, 2024**

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 238.

This bill creates an **optional** residential only certification for contractors in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), refrigeration, electrical, plumbing, and hydronics.

The new certification program will give residential contractors the opportunity for title protection and will encourage best practices in order to protect consumers from bad contractors.

An untrained person performing residential plumbing, HVAC or electrical work can blow up, burn down, flood or cause a cross connection in a house that can put their clients and community they live in at risk of injury, sickness, disease--even death, all resulting in potential criminal or civil proceedings against them.

An example, which unfortunately had severe consequences, occurred from the installation of a water heater. An incompetent or unethical residential contractor used flexible dryer vent as a chimney liner and connected that to the water heater. To fix the problem the homeowner called a licensed, competent contractor. The licensed contractor immediately measured the home for carbon monoxide. It registered 300 ppm--a very dangerous level. Concerned, he asked the homeowner where his family was. The homeowner responded that they were all at the doctor to be treated for the flu. Instead, they were treated for carbon monoxide poisoning. One more night in that house might have been their last.

This bill is our attempt to create a new standard for residential contractor work in the state of Ohio for training and competency while threading the needle of doing so in the least restrictive manner possible.

The Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board (OCILB) will administer the new state residential contractor certification program and certification can be acquired through an approved application along with a \$100 certification fee for a five year certificate.

Under the bill, certified residential contractors would also be required to complete four hours a year of continuing education and maintain proof of liability insurance with at least a \$250,000 minimum coverage and required coverage of direct labor subcontractors.

Those currently holding a commercial license are exempt from this legislation.

Additionally, nothing in this bill requires any one to hold a residential only certification to work on residential construction projects in the state of Ohio. The state certification also does not supersede local licensing requirements for residential contractors.

Thank you once again Chairwoman Roegner and members of the committee for the opportunity to present this legislation to you today. I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.