

Proponent Testimony for SB 54

Certification for Residential Contractors

Chairman Kyle Koehler, Vice Chair Michele Reynolds, Ranking Member Catherine Ingram, and members of the Workforce Development Committee...

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 54. My name is Rocco Fana, Jr., and I serve as the executive director for the Air Conditioning Contractors of Ohio (ACCO) and the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of Ohio (PHCC Ohio). Today, I am here to advocate for the passage of SB 54, which would establish a **certification** program for residential-only contractors in Ohio.

Certification vs. Licensing: Understanding the Difference

It is important to clarify the distinction between **certification** and **licensing**, as these terms are often confused.

- **Licensing** is a regulatory requirement that mandates contractors meet **specific state-mandated criteria**,

including education, experience, and exams, before being legally permitted to operate. It is common in commercial and highly specialized trades.

- **Certification**, as proposed in SB 54, is a **voluntary but structured credentialing process** that establishes **baseline competency and skill verification** for residential contractors. It provides a **level of consumer protection and professionalism without the burdens of full licensure**.

Ohio currently **lacks oversight** for residential contractors, meaning homeowners often have no way to verify the qualifications of those they hire. **SB 54 provides a balanced approach—offering accountability and consumer protection while avoiding excessive regulation**.

Consumer Safety & Peace of Mind

Homeowners trust contractors to work on **essential home systems**, including plumbing, HVAC, and electrical, which directly impact their **health and safety**. Without proper

oversight, unqualified individuals can cause **serious hazards**, such as:

- **Carbon monoxide poisoning** from faulty HVAC installations.
- **Water contamination** due to improper plumbing work.
- **Electrical fires** from unsafe wiring practices.
- **Structural failures** caused by poor workmanship.

SB 54 ensures that homeowners can have **peace of mind knowing their contractor has met established training and skill standards**. The certification program will **give consumers confidence** that their home projects are handled by knowledgeable, trained professionals who prioritize **safety and quality**.

Continuing Education: Keeping Contractors Up to Date

Certification alone is not enough. The **construction and mechanical trades evolve constantly**, with new **technologies, safety codes, and best practices** emerging

regularly. SB 54 incorporates **continuing education requirements** to ensure that certified contractors **stay current with industry advancements and safety standards.**

This benefits:

✓ **Homeowners** – Ensuring their homes are worked on by professionals who understand the latest regulations.

✓ **Contractors** – Helping them stay competitive and knowledgeable in an evolving industry.

✓ **Communities** – Reducing risks associated with unqualified workmanship.

The Need for Certification in Ohio

The **Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board (OCILB)** reports that many consumer complaints involve **unlicensed, unregulated residential contractors.** The most common issues include:

- **Poor workmanship** that violates safety codes.

- **Failure to obtain proper permits**, leading to legal and financial problems for homeowners.
- **Unsafe system installations**, putting families at risk.

These issues **could be prevented** with a certification program that ensures only **qualified** professionals work in Ohio homes. SB 54 helps **bridge the gap** between an unregulated market and full licensure, providing a **reasonable solution** that benefits everyone.

Conclusion

Senate Bill 54 strikes the right balance—**protecting Ohio homeowners while supporting responsible contractors**. By establishing **certification standards and continuing education**, SB 54 will enhance **workforce quality, consumer safety, and industry professionalism**.

Ohio homeowners **deserve** peace of mind, knowing that the contractors they hire are **qualified, skilled, and properly trained** to work in their homes.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.

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