

Proponent Testimony for SB 54
Workforce Development Committee

Good morning, Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Workforce Development Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 54. My name is Larry Betlejewski, Jr., and I am the owner of Beetle's Plumbing Solutions in North Royalton, Ohio. As of March 6, I am the current past president of PHCC Ohio. While my business has only been open for two years, I have been in the plumbing industry for over 30 years, working in underground water, gas, and sewer repairs, as well as new construction, service, and repair.

Senate Bill 54 seeks to establish a certification program for residential only contractors in Ohio. This legislation is essential for improving the safety, quality, and professionalism of residential construction and renovation services in the plumbing, HVAC and electrical industries.

Currently, Ohio lacks consistent statewide standards for residential only contractors, creating challenges for both consumers and industry professionals. By implementing a certification program, SB54 addresses this gap, ensuring that contractors meet essential qualifications, follow ethical practices, and deliver high quality work.

Over my career, I have encountered—and repaired—many dangerous situations where homeowners hired someone, they "knew" to work on their

gas-fired water heater. In one case, improper venting led to a carbon monoxide leak inside the home. The fire department had to respond before we were called in to fix the issue. This was a simple mistake that could have had deadly consequences. I firmly believe this situation could have been avoided entirely if the person performing the work had even basic training in water heater installation.

Another critical reason for certification is the protection of our precious water supply. Access to clean, potable water is essential for life, yet I have encountered numerous cases where unqualified individuals improperly installed plumbing systems—resulting in sewage contamination of drinking water. In one instance, a homeowner unknowingly consumed contaminated water until they noticed a foul odor coming from their kitchen tap. Upon investigation, we discovered that an improperly installed backup sump pump was siphoning sewer water into the home's water supply. Situations like this pose serious health risks and could be prevented with proper training and certification.

I could share countless stories from my 30 years in the industry, but the bottom line is clear—Ohio needs this bill to move forward. The skilled trades workforce is shrinking, and without action, the shortage will only worsen. Certified plumbers are essential to protecting the health and safety of Ohio's

residents, ensuring that homes and businesses have access to safe, reliable plumbing systems now and for future generations.

Thank you for your time

Larry Betlejewski, Jr

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State of Ohio PHCC President