

Proponent Testimony for SB 54: Certification for Residential Contractors

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

My name is Scott Haring, and I am a Residential Replacement Specialist for an Ohio-based, commercially licensed heating and cooling company in Columbus. Today, I am here to support Senate Bill 54, to promote contractor certification to enhance public safety and accountability.

Certification acts as a vital benchmark for technical competence, ethical responsibility, and adherence to best practices. I have entered thousands of homes in my role over the past 16 years and have encountered numerous issues stemming from improperly installed systems. The most sinister is improper venting of exhaust leading to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide indoors—risking illness or death to occupants.

These are not isolated incidents. Certification serves as a proactive solution. It ensures that contractors installing and servicing critical mechanical systems, such as heating and cooling units or water heaters, have demonstrated their knowledge and commitment to safety standards. SB 54 would be a mark of competence to the public.

Our goal is not to create a “barrier to entry” for contractors to work in plumbing or heating and cooling, similar to obtaining a driver’s license to operate a motor vehicle in public. Driving without credentials is a violation of the law, and contracting without a certificate should incur similar penalties. Homeowners deserve peace of mind the contractors they’ve hired are certified professionals.

Currently some contractors “fly below the radar” and undermine the reputation of skilled professionals by cutting corners or bypassing safety protocols. Homeowners have told me they are surprised to learn that plumbing and heating and cooling contractors have no state-level certification requirement. So many vocations require a license: lawyers, real estate agents, and barbers.

It’s ironic that a few years ago, to protect homebuyers, Senate Bill 255 established licensure for home inspectors who are examining installations by contractors who require no credentials. Homeowners should retain the ability to perform their own work as long as it adheres to established codes and inspection requirements. To reiterate, SB 54 is a certification for Ohio’s trades, aligning contractor standards with the safety expectations of the public.

Thank you, Scott Haring Dublin OH