

**April 25, 2023**  
**Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee**

**Bill Franklin, President**  
**Mid-States District Council of Roofers & Waterproofers**

**Proponent Testimony HB 129**

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, and Ranking Member McNally and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee:

My name is Bill Franklin and I serve as the Business Representative for Roofers Local 44 and represent over 500 active members and retirees. Additionally, I serve as President of the Mid-States District Council of Roofers and Waterproofers which represents approximately over 2,200 members in Ohio. I am also a member of ACT Ohio.

We are pleased to submit this testimony today to express our enthusiastic support of HB 129. Because of the lack of licensure in the roofing industry, there are very serious quality issues within the industry, systemic employment fraud with independent contractor abuse, and all too often serious safety issues.

Far too often, I've seen contractors with little to no experience be awarded commercial roofing projects with disastrous results for the customer. Across Ohio we are working with school districts that have had to spend millions of dollars in repairs to their roofing systems only years after their initial construction. These incidents are 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 129 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 trades 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 129 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.

Finally, the roofing industry can be a dangerous place for workers. Without the proper training standards in place; serious accidents can occur. According to the Occupational Safety & Health

Administration (OSHA), roofing is the third most dangerous occupation in the United States<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, the most common safety violation issued by OSHA was the lack of fall protection provided to workers by contractors<sup>2</sup>. The lack of adequate fall protection can easily lead to worker losing their life.

HB 129 would put into place minimum standards to help make sure that contractors clearly understand their obligations to provide a safe workplace for their employees. In an industry as dangerous as roofing, I believe a basic licensing standard is a common-sense reform that can and will save lives.

HB 129 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 129 will help raise industry quality, address independent contractor abuse, improve basic safety standards, and is supported by both workers and employers. Accordingly, I urge your support for HB 129. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/data/commonstats>