

Melissa Weipert

From: Dave Jones <DaveJones@johnegreen.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2016 10:22 AM
To: Rep. Dan Lauwers (District 81); Rep. Roger Victory (District 88); Rep. Rob VerHeulen (District 74)
Cc: Rep. David Rutledge; Melissa Weipert
Subject: House Bill No. 5435

Importance: High

Gentlemen,

I am writing regarding House Bill No. 5435 which seeks to amend PA 733, the State Plumbing Act. To understand some of my perspective, I'd like to share some of my background with you.

I was appointed by Governor Granholm in 2006 to serve on the State Plumbing Board and did so until 2014, serving as Chairperson at the end of my last appointment by Governor Snyder. During that time, I saw the importance of the State Plumbing Act. Going back further in time, I attended the University of Michigan after high school. After spending two summers working on the renovation of the UM football stadium and finding that I enjoyed it, decided to pursue the education required to become a plumber. I was not able to get into the local union apprentice program right away and went to work for a local company performing service work. In order to get the job, I had to buy my own truck and tools. With very limited training and after accompanying a licensed plumber for 1-2 weeks, I was sent out on my own. I began replacing plumbing fixtures, faucets, snaking drains, and replacing hot water heaters in people's homes. I quickly learned how little I knew about the plumbing trade and quit working there. I realized I was learning at other people's expense or as I liked to say at the time, "learned by getting burned." I then tried working at a retail store after being told they were in the midst of hiring a Master Plumber who would train me. I again began performing service work out of their store. After they failed to hire a Master Plumber, I quit working there. I worked at a pizzeria and other odd jobs after that until I was given in an apprenticeship in Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union 190 in Ann Arbor. My experience up to that point is not unique. There are many people installing hot water heaters who are not licensed. Either because they have not had the opportunity or because they don't think they need it, the cause doesn't really matter. The point is that doing so puts the citizens of the State of Michigan at risk. Weakening the State Plumbing Act will only worsen the problem of inexperienced and unqualified people performing this type of work.

Even some of the people who have qualified to take the State's journey plumbing exam are not able to pass the test either because of their score on the required copper project or the written exam. There is a reason for this two part exam—people need to understand the code requirements and be able to perform the work. Given the current environment in the State after the Flint water crisis, I am baffled as to why we would want to weaken the State Plumbing Act. This change would not be of benefit to the citizens of Michigan and I ask that you reconsider your position on this Bill.

Respectfully,

Dave Jones CPD, LEED AP BD+C | Corporate Quality Director
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