

Testimony for Public Hearing
Senate Committee on Commerce

March 18, 2013

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SUBSTITUTE for HOUSE BILL No 2024 (Committee) – enacting the Kansas roofing contractor registration act

My name is Mark Eaton and I am a Kansas roofing contractor. I am the founder and owner of Wichita Roofing and Remodeling, located in Wichita, Kansas. I am a lifelong Kansan and an advocate for my chosen industry - ROOFING. Since 1993, my company has served over 25,000 customers in eight different states and it is through those experiences that I believe my testimony is warranted with regard to the proposed Substitute for House Bill No. 2024.

This proposed bill is intended to supplement the Kansas Consumer Protection act. The goal of the Substitute for House Bill No. 2024 is to protect Kansas consumers from roofing contractors who commit deceptive sales techniques and unreasonable roofing practices. Each year following storms in our state, consumers are vulnerable to the misleading practices of out-of-state, non-registered, non-tax-paying roofing contractors and their sales people.

In 2010, the Sedgwick County District Attorney investigated American Shingle, a roofing contractor based in Atlanta, Georgia for their aggressive solicitation of unsuspecting homeowners in the Wichita area. Their salesmen went door to door collecting signed contracts and down-payments for roofing work they never intended to perform. At the conclusion of their rampage, they were accused of defrauding hundreds of people in over ten states, including Kansas. In February 2011, the CEO of American Shingle turned himself over to Georgia authorities. By that time, he had collected millions of dollars from consumers, only to file bankruptcy leaving numerous creditors in various states holding the bag. Not to mention the State of Kansas losing out on tax revenue.

The Substitute for House Bill No. 2024 is requiring registration of each roofing contractor planning to perform work in Kansas. The current licensing in our state is delegated to each county or city, many of whom don't require licensing and typically receive inaccurate information. The lack of a statewide registration program makes Kansas a safe haven for deceptive roofing contractors. The Substitute for House Bill No. 2024 would assist in eliminating this by requiring what our bordering states have already enacted.

Requirements of The Substitute for House Bill No. 2024 that I feel are necessary and worth restating to you are:

- to maintain General Liability insurance and Workers Compensation insurance
- to maintain an active status with the state as a viable company
- to maintain certification by renewing registrations annually
- to file and pay all taxes due the State of Kansas
- the ability for the Attorney General to conduct background checks

I am asking for your support in passing The Substitute for House Bill No. 2024 – enacting the Kansas Roofing Contractor Registration Act. We need to protect Kansas consumers, but also no longer allow roofing contractors with poor business practices to tarnish our industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration.