

Testimony in Support of SB 658

Maryland Senate Finance Committee

Stacey Maud | General Manager

Ace Handyman Services Annapolis, Eastern Shore, and Ocean City

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes, and esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of SB 658. My name is Stacey Maud, and I am the General Manager of Ace Handyman Services Annapolis, Eastern Shore, and Ocean City. Our business is part of the Ace Home Services division, which was established by Ace Hardware five years ago with the goal of providing reliable, high-quality handyman services. As a franchisee, we are required to maintain non-compete agreements with our employees. These agreements are essential to protecting our business model, the significant investments we make in our employees and customers, and the integrity of our services.

Our craftsmen work under our license and insurance, which ensures customers receive fully protected, professional services. We cover all the overhead costs associated with permits, bonding, and general liability insurance. In addition, we provide vehicles, tools, equipment, and steady marketing to secure our customer base. These marketing expenses alone are significant, and our investment in customer relationships is critical to our ongoing success.

It is important to note that we do not prohibit our craftsmen from taking on side work. However, we do require that they do not take our customers or use our brand, vehicles, or equipment in their side work. Violating these requirements undermines the investments we make to build our reputation and ensure high-quality service for our customers.

One notable example involved a job where we were hired to remove a through-the-wall air conditioner. After completing the removal, the customer hired our former handyman to return and install a window. The window was improperly sized, leaving a four-inch gap in the wall. This left the customer with a botched job and no recourse, damaging our reputation in the process.

Our craftsmen regularly report that customers often solicit them for work. Fortunately, our employees are transparent about these requests because they appreciate the environment we provide. They choose to work for Ace because we offer competitive pay, steady work, and consistent hours—allowing them to enjoy their evenings and weekends without relying on additional income from these types of jobs.

Just as intellectual property protections exist for pharmaceutical and technology companies, businesses like ours deserve similar protections for the investments we make in our employees and operations. Without the safeguards that SB 658 would provide, we remain vulnerable to unfair competition, customer losses, and reputational damage due to employee actions that conflict with or compete with our business operations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support SB 658. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stacey Maud

General Manager

Ace Handyman Services Annapolis, Eastern Shore, and Ocean City