

Thank you Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, Delegate Qi, members of the committee.

My name is Eric Catellier. I am a registered architect in the state of Maryland and a member of the American Institute of Architects and have been so since 2010. I am a resident of Salisbury and currently work for Rauch, Incorporated in Easton. I have previously worked for two other firms in Salisbury as well. The project types in my portfolio are widely varied, including: single and multi-family residential, commercial, retail, hospitality, health care, and small and large scale industrial.

I am here today to support House Bill 1180. I helped to add language to the Senate bill to allow for anonymous reporting. I agree that it is important to safeguard the profession of architecture against those who try to short cut or ignore the oversight of the State Board of Architects. In doing so, they put those who occupy their buildings at risk.

The guiding principle of architectural registration, in Maryland and across the county, is the Health, Safety and Welfare of the occupants of our buildings. As professional architects, we want to design beautiful buildings, however we are also held to several local, state, national and international codes and standards. We need to ensure that those people who are designing buildings in Maryland are trained and capable of implementing not only good design, but safe design.

Unfortunately, as in all industries, there are bad actors. In order to root out these bad actors, the system calls on its members to identify and report them. Our current system requires that those who submit a report must provide their personal and professional information to be publicly attached to each accusation of wrongdoing. Based on my experience, and that of other architects, I can attest that this process has given us pause. I have had to consider the repercussions that might fall back on me or my firm. I have to expect that those who operate unethically and unprofessionally will fight back in the same manner.

We all live and work in tight knit communities in Maryland. If you have spent time on the Eastern Shore, you know this to be especially true. I worked with Senator Kagan and her office to provide the language for this bill to create an anonymous whistleblower reporting system. This system would empower anyone to report potentially unethical or illegal activities related to our industry. This would simplify the online reporting system and give the Board of Architects a better chance to protect both the integrity of our profession and the safety of the general public.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.