

To: State of New Jersey – 220<sup>th</sup> Legislature

RE: Bill A2138 – Session 2022-2023

From: VGM Live at Home – A Membership Service Organization Serving the Home Access Industry

VGM Live at Home has a national network of independent home access companies within our membership. We educate them on how to professionally assess and execute needed Home Modifications. We have an extensive code of ethics we require of our members, and they must all be complete our Certified Environment Access Consultant (C.E.A.C.) course. Our focus is making sure consumers needs are met with appropriate safe solutions and our member companies work to bring their clients the best outcome within the budget or funding resources available. This type of work is the passion of members to help their clients live independently and safely in their homes.

We are respectfully submitting comments on this proposed bill and some unforeseen consequences that would come with passage of this bill that would have a negative effect on existing home access companies and New Jersey citizens.

Home access companies have a primary focus on modifying home homes for people with mobility challenges who wish to Age in Place or may have a mobility challenged family member. There are several services provided by this niche industry that are more than \$500 and are non-structural home modifications. Examples would be installing grab bars, stairlifts, modular aluminum ramps, vertical platform lifts and automatic door openers. These items are non-permanent additions and in almost all cases do not require building permits. The skills needed to professionally install these items is on the handyman level and all companies are certified to install the products by the manufactures. Many of our members have a licensed contractor in house and some do not. Many of the above services are performed by field technicians who are not licensed and trained well in installation and perform these services in New Jersey and the rest of the United States market. Currently this market is underserved, and we need as many companies providing these needed services as our population ages.

A suggestion that would be redefining "home improvement" for the sake of requiring this license may want to use the word "structural alteration to a home" in its definition rather than just "altering".

First and foremost, if this bill is passed many of our member companies who have opened for business in the last five years be having to close shop the day this bill if passed as is gets implemented.

This bill, as written, would have regulations exceeding 95% of the rest of the country as we know it. We do not have firsthand knowledge of every ordinance in every state and municipality but have not seen a law requiring five years of experience for not permitted work. We do however agree with the continuing education requirements as we have that built into our program.

We have many new companies coming into the home access industry and the impact of this regulation will impact the growth of these needed services in New Jersey.

The added cost to existing companies will be passed on to consumers which many are Seniors impacting the ability to afford these services. We might add that when Seniors cannot safely live in their homes and are forced out and must sell their asset many run out of funds within 18-36 months and become wards of the state where the cost to the taxpayers is much higher. Most states are implementing laws that make it easier for their citizens to get their Home modified so they live in it if possible. This law could have the opposite effect.



Lastly, this bill, if passed will decrease the value of the existing businesses in this industry. Potential buyers would be much more limited. New Jersey will be on the way to becoming similar to Oregon and Washington state. They have overregulated the home access industry and are grossly underserved. Most people cannot find a company to supply for their needs

We appreciate and thank you for any consideration regarding our concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Creatorex

Vice President

VGM Live at Home