



Louisiana's HB953: A Warning Sign for the Trades

Falls Church, Va. — On June 12, 2026, Governor Jeff Landry signed [HB953](#) into law — and with it, Louisiana enacted what PHCC believes to be the most damaging rollback of plumbing licensure standards seen anywhere in the country in recent memory. For context: in 2019, the Texas Legislature nearly allowed its state plumbing licensing board to sunset entirely before Governor Greg Abbott intervened to preserve it. HB953 doesn't go that far, but in some ways, what it does is more consequential.

The law does not eliminate plumbing licensure, but it dismantles the independent governance structure that has made Louisiana's plumbing licensing framework effective. The State Plumbing Board of Louisiana — until now the only building trade in the state with its own independent regulatory authority — is being folded into the Louisiana State Licensing Board of Contractors as a subcommittee, with the Board of Contractors assuming ultimate authority over license issuance. Decisions that were once made by subject matter experts and experienced plumbing professionals will now be made by a body without that specialized expertise.

The most consequential provision, however, involves hours requirements. Beginning Jan. 1, 2027, apprentices will need only 2,500 hours to sit for the journeyman's exam, and journeymen will need only 1,000 hours of work experience to be eligible for a contractor's license. These reductions create a compounding risk: less-prepared workers entering the market faster, at every level of the licensing pipeline.

Louisiana is not an isolated case. PHCC has been tracking a troubling pattern across the country as states and localities pursue the weakening of building trade licensing requirements, building code freezes, and broad reciprocity agreements — all under the banner of housing affordability. California has seen residential code freezes. North Carolina is weighing a proposal for unlimited licensing reciprocity with no evaluation of whether other states maintain comparable standards. What was once a largely partisan policy posture is now drawing bipartisan support, because the affordability argument is politically appealing — regardless of what it actually costs in building safety, workforce quality, and long-term resilience.

The problem with that logic is straightforward: cutting corners doesn't lower costs, it defers them. Work done by undertrained hands creates failures that must be repaired — and those repairs cost far more than the savings ever justified. More fundamentally, the plumbing and HVAC trades aren't an abstraction. They are the systems that deliver clean water, maintain indoor air quality, and protect the health and safety of every building

occupant. The public risk of weakening the standards that govern this work is real and serious.

PHCC urges our state and local chapters and industry partners to take this moment seriously. Engage your elected officials proactively. Make the case for a well-trained workforce and a rigorous licensing framework — not as a matter of professional self-interest, but as a matter of public health and safety. And know that PHCC stands ready to support you in that work. PHCC will be rolling out a new webpage of resources and stories that can be used to help make these arguments in state capitals across the country. Stay tuned for that and more, and if you have any questions in the meantime, please reach out to us at government@naphcc.org.