



OPPOSE

MEMORANDUM IN

OPPOSITION

TO

S.1003C – Gaughran / A.7947A – Stern

The CSEA strongly opposes the passage of this legislation.

This legislation would amend the general municipal law to allow registered architects and engineers to self-certify their own documents for the issuance of a building permit.

CSEA represents the workers in local governments across the state who are responsible for ensuring the safety and code compliance of building projects. These professionals complete hours of training every year to ensure that they have the most up to date knowledge on building codes and procedures and have only one interest when reviewing plans – public safety. By removing their review and allowing builders to self-certify that their plans are up to code, a layer of safety is lost and the likelihood of health and safety violations increases.

While eliminating the role of building departments in the initial steps of the process may expedite when a project can begin, it very well could increase wait times and costs later in the process. In some towns, 75% of building plans are not approved the first time around. This means that only 1 in 4 applications submitted by architects and engineers are safe and up to standard prior to being reviewed and require some alterations before the project can safely move forward.

Under a program of self-certification, however, these errors would only be caught after construction was already underway. Therefore, instead of speeding up construction and cutting costs, removing government oversight would increase the likelihood of construction delays, unforeseen costs, and frustrated and disappointed property owners.

Ensuring public safety is a fundamental government responsibility. Removing the oversight of a neutral party, concerned only with projects being completed safely and up to code, would be an abdication of this responsibility.

On behalf of more than 300,000 active and retired, public, and private employees across New York State, CSEA strongly urges the rejection of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Turner
Director

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Legislative Representative