



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Attorney General Frosh Sues Unlicensed Home Improvement Contractor**

***Contractor Allegedly Collected Advance Payments, Failed to Complete Work. AG Also Seeking Over \$1.2 Million Owed to Consumers Under Prior Settlement.***

**BALTIMORE, MD (October 17, 2019)** – Maryland Attorney Brian E. Frosh announced that his Consumer Protection Division has filed charges against John Eberl for taking money from consumers for home improvement projects, but failing to provide the work or refund the money. The Division also alleged that Eberl’s offer and sale of the home improvement services without a license violated the Consumer Protection Act. Under Maryland law, home improvement contractors must be licensed by the Maryland Home Improvement Commission.

The complaint filed by the Division alleges that Eberl contracted with several consumers in Prince George’s, Harford, Caroline, Montgomery, and Howard Counties to build patios, fences, and other home improvements, and collected large deposits—often thousands of dollars—before performing any work. The Division alleged that after collecting the deposits, Eberl failed to complete the work, and in many cases, never even started. The Division alleges that at no point did Eberl have the licenses required to offer, sell, or provide home improvements. The complaint seeks an order requiring Eberl to pay consumers back, to cease violating the law, and to pay a penalty for his violations.

In addition, the Division is also seeking an order requiring Eberl and Kelly Burke, his former business associate, to pay amounts they owe under a previous settlement agreement. Eberl and Burke entered into a settlement agreement with the Division in 2014 to resolve similar allegations that the sports uniform company they operated, Sports55, Inc., took payment from consumers for uniforms that they never provided. The prior settlement requires Burke and Eberl to return all the money they collected from consumers who did not get their uniforms or receive refunds, but those amounts have not been fully paid.

“Taking advance payments, failing to perform the promised work, refusing to provide refunds, and failing to obtain proper licenses are all violations of Maryland’s consumer protection laws,” said Attorney General Frosh. “We are seeking relief that will make the homeowners whole, and we are asking the court to impose penalties on Eberl as well.”

Home improvement contractors are required to be licensed by the Maryland Home Improvement Commission. Consumers can verify a contractor’s license through the Home Improvement Commission’s web site, [www.dllr.state.md.us/license/mhic](http://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/mhic). In addition, in Maryland, it is

against the law for a contractor to accept more than one-third of the total contract price in advance.

Consumers with complaints against Eberl may call the Consumer Protection Division at 410-528-8662, file a complaint online at [www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov), or write to the Consumer Protection Division at 200 St. Paul Place, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202.