



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Announces Charges Against Unlicensed Home-Improvement Contractor Based in Baltimore City *Charges Allege Unfair and Deceptive Practices in Violation of Consumer Protection Act*

BALTIMORE, MD (July 7, 2020) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that his Consumer Protection Division has filed charges against John Andre Upchurch, who does business as Upchurch Building Concepts, for acting as an unlicensed home-improvement contractor, for accepting payment for home-improvement work but failing to provide the promised services, and for failing to refund payments to consumers.

In addition to the [Statement of Charges](#) alleging violations of the Maryland Consumer Protection Act, the Division filed a parallel action in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City seeking a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against Upchurch, to stop him from selling home improvement services until the conclusion of the administrative action brought by the Division, or Mr. Upchurch gets the required home improvement license and posts a bond with the Division to protect consumers—whichever occurs sooner.

According to the Statement of Charges, Upchurch represents to Maryland consumers, most of whom lived in and around Baltimore City, that he is a licensed home-improvement contractor although he is not licensed, and enters into agreements for home-improvement work based on this false representation. The Division alleges that Upchurch accepts substantial payments from consumers under these agreements—although Maryland law limits home improvement contractors from taking deposits of no more than 1/3 of an agreed upon price—and then either fails to begin the work or begins preliminary work, including demolition, before abandoning the project and leaving consumers’ homes incomplete and in disarray. The Division further alleges that as a result of Upchurch’s illegal activities, consumers must hire other contractors, at significant expense, to repair or complete the projects that Upchurch has abandoned.

“Operating a home-improvement business without the required license, taking advance payments greater than 1/3 of the contracted price, failing to perform the promised work, and refusing to provide refunds are all violations of Maryland’s consumer protection laws,” said Attorney General Frosh. “We seek to stop Mr. Upchurch’s alleged illegal actions and restitution for consumers harmed by these actions.”

The Division is seeking an injunction, as well as payment of restitution, penalties, and costs for the alleged violations of Maryland’s Consumer Protection Act. A hearing has been set for

September 28, 2020, at the Office of Administrative Hearings in Hunt Valley, Maryland. For more information, consumers may call the Consumer Protection hotline at (410) 528-8662 or toll free at (888) 743-0023.