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Lawmaker wants roofers in Georgia to be licensed

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Roof repair on Carolyn Wagner's home

ATLANTA — A Georgia lawmaker wants all roofers operating in the state to be licensed, and he has the full support of the Georgia Association of Roofers.

State Rep. Tom Weldon, R-Ringgold, is sponsoring House Bill 301 would require roofers to have the same kind of license now required of other contractors. Right now, he said, Georgia is the only southeastern state that does not require roofer licenses.

"It requires those who are roofers to be licensed," said Weldon. "(It) tells the state who they are, and that's all it does."

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Weldon said he was first alerted the problem when his hometown of Ringgold was devastated by a tornado. He said he knows of several instances when unscrupulous and unlicensed roofers ripped off his constituents.

"They had to deal with these people who descended on them," said Weldon. "They were preying on people who were hurt."

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The law has the full support of the Roofers and Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Georgia.

"Very rarely do you see an industry who wants to be more regulated than they already are," said RSMCA spokesperson Don Bolia. "But I think they discovered they cannot self-regulate."

Bolia said the RSMCA is worried that every time a bad storm hits Georgia, unscrupulous roofers set up operations in the state.

"If you're an unlicensed roofer, and you want to do business and a storm comes through, Georgia is an easy target because you don't have to have a license to do business here," said Bolia.

Carolyn Wagner paid an unlicensed roofer \$3,500 to repair her roof. He stripped off all her shingles, but never finished the job. Rain leaked inside her Southwest Atlanta home of 30 years and damaged much of the interior. Ryno Roof Solutions offered to repair the roof free of charge and spent Thursday shingling her roof.

"I felt bad for the homeowner," said Ryno Roof Solutions' Dirk Gowder. "She's the same age as my mother."

Gowder also supports the proposed law because, he said, bad roofers hurt the good ones.

"It makes good contractors look bad," said Gowder. "The good roofers joke around, and we say Georgia is the state all criminals come to roof."

Weldon said last year's version of the bill made it through a House subcommittee but didn't go much farther. He is hopeful this year's version will become a law.

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