

Joel Sicherman dba BestDarnMovers  
210 Division Street  
Kingston PA 18704  
August 6, 2017

Docket No. L-2017-2604692

Secretary Rosemay Chiavetta  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
Commonwealth Keystone Building, 2nd Floor  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Secretary Chiavetta

I am writing as a concerned party about a practice that is unwarranted, unfair and unAmerican.

It is the practice of giving currently certified movers the right to 'protest' new applicants for Household Moving Certification. Enclosed is a copy taken from our Facebook page describing the hell we are being put through and my feelings on this matter.

Is there a soul on earth that believes the protestants, (in my case, Cadden Brothers in Olyphant, PA and Matheson Transfer in Forty Fort), or any protestant in this state, has protested because of their concern for the safety and well being of customers? Of course not. They are interested only in continuing the monopoly stranglehold they have on the moving industry, specifically in my particular area and more generally around the state.

A 'piece of the pie' is of no interest to them; they want the whole pie. The unfortunate thing is that all this is happening under the nose, in fact with the blessing of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

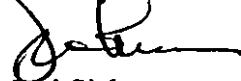
Several years ago the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission set about to ease regulations. Rightfully, that served as an invitation for qualified new entrants to apply for Household Moving Certification. Those actions were encouraging.

I ask you, Secretary Chiavetta to finish the job that was started- approve new applicants based on their ability to serve the public skillfully and with integrity. It is simply not any longer logical, especially in this age of Uber and Netflix, through arcane regulations and artificial protections, to keep qualified applicants away from the industry or vocation they choose for themselves.

Enclosed are copies that relate to this situation. I hope you will check our reviews at any of the review sites- Angie's List, Yelp, YP.com, Uship.com, etc. I believe you'll see how good we are at what we do. From a consumer standpoint, I don't think you are doing the public any favor by leaving us on the outside looking in.

I am available by phone or email, or face-to-face if there are any questions.

Thank you.



Joel Sicherman  
BestDarnMovers  
570.852.9243

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PA PUC  
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*From our FB page*

## **Bestdarnmovers & Bdm Moving Helpers**

Published by Joel Sicherman July 2

### **CURRENTLY WE ARE 'LABOR ONLY'. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**

It means that currently we can't service your need for a 'full-service household move'. Legally we are prohibited from showing up with our own truck, loading that truck with your possessions, and driving them to a drop-off point. However if you furnish the truck, (your own or a rented truck like Uhaul), we will do the heavy lifting for you.

(Quick note that we ARE fully licensed to do property moves; that includes office moves and retail deliveries. If you have any question about whether or not we can service your move, just call us. 570.852.9243. Also note that WE ARE FULLY INSURED, of course- liability, cargo and workmen's comp. Insurance is not the issue. This has only to do with obtaining a Household Moving Certificate from the PA PUC.) Heck, some states don't even require agency certification.

This is so infuriating. I can rant on this all day, but will try to be brief.

As many of you know, we've been moving people for 11 years. Check out our Yelp page to see how and why we got started. I think it's interesting. For now at least, suffice it to say that I never thought I'd be in the moving business.

But we are! And a look at our customers' reviews on Angie'sList, Yelp, YP.com, Uship.com and others, and you'll quickly arrive at the correct conclusion that we're pretty good at what we do.

In Pennsylvania, trucking and moving are regulated, of course, by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

### **PUC REGULATIONS ALLOW CURRENTLY LICENSED MOVERS TO PROTEST NEW APPLICANTS.**

Yes, you read that correctly: those that would be our direct competitors currently have the right to block our entry into the household moving industry.

"Is that constitutional?" you may ask.

Well in fact, these regulations are not all that uncommon; a few other states have them. However several states HAVE RECENTLY MOVED FORWARD to reconsider and rule as unconstitutional these unfair and outdated practices. Pennsylvania isn't one of them. Not yet.

This link explains pretty well what we've been up against:

<http://www.kentucky.com/news/business/article44469750.html>

In February of 2016, we filed with the PUC for our certificate to move household goods. If there were no protests by those 'currently licensed movers', we would be legally certificated in about 90 to 120 days; we'd be fully and legally up and running by June, 2016...LAST YEAR.

Along comes "Matheson Transfer" and "Cadden Brothers" with a Philadelphia Law Firm to protest us- to fight our certification. So the last year-plus has been an endless series of letters to the PUC, phone calls, expenses and travel to Philadelphia for hearings so that we can prove our 'fitness' to

operate a moving company. We suffered lost business in the tens of thousands and countless hours explaining all this to newer and older customers alike.

You may ask, "what is fitness" as it relates to our certification?

In a nutshell fitness is,

- our propensity to follow PUC regulations,
- that we be properly insured, that our trucks be safe,
- that our workers be careful and that
- we treat our customers with integrity.

Of course we are all those things. You'd probably expect me to say that.

But with this one point let me illustrate how crazy this all is:

- the PUC urges all parties, (me the applicant and the protesting movers), to get together and 'talk it out', (kumbaya?)- *to try and resolve issues so that we could move forward with our certification.* If I would be successful in convincing those protesting movers, (Matheson and Cadden), to drop the protests we would then be 'fit'. (Despite repeated requests, those two movers simply refused to meet with me which raises, I believe, a bevy of other distinct fairness issues.)

So bottom line is that BestDarnMovers 'fitness' is solely a condition of, if or not the protestants decide to protest- or not. It's a function of how greedy these protestants want to be and how much agony they want to inflict on us.

In reality, based on current regulation, our 'fitness' has very little to do with how we operate, how we deal with customers, how we reply to customers concerns or the way we charge for our services. What's wrong with this picture!

What this foul situation amounts to is that the biggest, most established movers in town, who have been operating for decades under the outdated and unconstitutional protections of the PA PUC, use their size and influence to stifle competition and shut down potentially new competitors.

The primary end result, besides the painful constraints placed on us, is moving prices remain artificially high. Unfortunate also this all happens with the blessing of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. Fairness be damned.

"Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" doesn't enter into it for now. Well I think it should.

The PA PUC is a regulatory agency and by their own definition the PA PUC is also a consumer agency. They should, I believe, be working, through regulation, to raise the quality and quantity of qualified movers thus lowering the costs of moving services for the public. Protective policies like this one maintain the status quo; they don't effect positive change.

Can you imagine that you decide to open your own pizzeria but before you get licensed, your competitors have the right to contest your opening? Sounds crazy, right?

If this situation infuriates you as it infuriates us, my hope is that you'll use us, not them even though you'll need to supply the truck; also that you'll contact your local State Representative and point them to this synopsis.

**Let the free market rule.**

The protestants have had decades of artificial protection and this unfairness shouldn't be allowed to continue. The current regulations as prescribed are unconstitutional. This is not the American way. Each new applicant, whether it's BestDarnMovers or any other person who wants to make his living in this business, should be given a FAIR shot at certification based on their abilities, character, financial history, and their reputation for customers service.

We welcome your scrutiny. Google us. Check our reviews at Yelp, Angie'sList, Uship.com and any/all the other rating services.

**Then take a minute to check our protestants reviews as well and tell us who you would hire to move your worldly goods.**

Finally to all of our clients who have chosen BestDarnMovers over other movers, who have agreed to supply their own truck despite the obvious inconveniences- you've kept us in business and WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH.

Early on in this process I thought we'd be dead in the water because after all- who wants to be hassled by all this. Well, as it turns out many people have gone out of their way for us. For that we are eternally grateful.

Again, never hesitate to ask us questions. Additional information is available at our website, BestDarnMovers.com, and at our Facebook Page. BestDarnMovers and BDM Moving Helpers  
Thank you.

Joel Sicherman and all the great movers at BestDarnMovers  
570.852.9243

Comments



Bryan S. Ghingold Joel, just say the word and I'll be on the phone with Robert Bingamon at the PA PUC advocating for you. If you want, as a licensed mover in PA, I can call the two other companies and see if they will drop their protest (unlikely, but they can't hurt me- I've got the license)

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BestDarnMovers & Bdm Moving Helpers Thanks for the offer Bry. They will hang up on you. Its not just me and BestDarnMovers. Cadden and Matheson and their Philadelphia law firm have teamed up to protest others in the area who dare try to challenge their stranglehold on the area. At least two that I know of; there may be more. Kris Eckerl, Michael's Moving in Dingman's Ferry, (Docket A-2014-2429336) and John Albritton, Johny On The Spot, (Docket A-2017-2598148) both are good and able young men who have applied for the Certificate, only to be challenged by these behemoth, protected companies. I hope people come to realize what's going on in this industry, in this state- and choose their movers with two things in mind: reviews by previous customers and actionable support of the free market.

**BestDarnMovers**

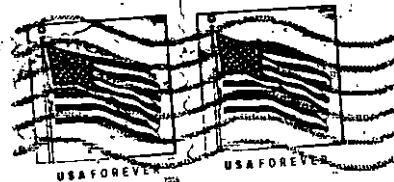
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**BestDarnMovers.com**

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Pennsylvania PUC  
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...friends don't let friends schlep furniture.

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