



Connecticut Coalition of Interior Designers

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Sen. Doyle, Rep. Taborsak and respected members of the General Law Committee:

My name is John Arabolos, I am a Registered Interior Designer, Small Business Owner in West Haven and an Interior Design Educator at the University of New Haven. I am here today with my colleague Alex Lanuk, also a Registered Interior Designer, Small Business Owner in Stamford and an Interior Design Educator at Norwalk Community College in support of HB5307.

- Interior Design is an evolving profession that includes many aspects of technical expertise.
- In the practice of Interior Design, education and skill sets vary in relation to specific education qualifications and specialized knowledge of building codes; preparing plans and specifications for non-load bearing interior construction and design solutions for those with special needs to creating personal living environments.
- "Registered" Interior Designers working in residential settings must comply with state and local building codes. While "Registered" Interior Designers working in more heavily regulated spaces such as office, hospitality, health, education and retail must comply with building and energy codes, indoor air quality and the American's with Disabilities Act requirements, among other health and safety issues.
- A federal court decision declared that it was unconstitutional to enforce legislation or regulation that restricted the use of the words "Interior Designer" as it has been used in the public domain in CT for over a century. At the same time the court reaffirmed that creating a licensed, *registered* or certified Interior Designer in order to provide necessary oversight for public health and safety needs while expanding practice opportunities was permissible and provided a benefit to the State and consumer.
- Based on this ruling the State of Connecticut now regulates the title *Registered Interior Designer* yet statute currently prohibits use or display of the registration number by qualified individuals.

The passage of HB 5307 will rectify that prohibition thus allowing Registered Interior Designers to utilize their registration number to identify their specialized skill set - affirming specific knowledge and abilities. While, in turn it provides accountability for Consumers and awareness of the various levels of design service available in order to make an appropriate selection on the design professional to retain for a specific project. In selecting a Registered Interior Designer, consumers will know they're working with qualified, responsible professionals that utilize the latest information regarding health, safety, and welfare and who have met specific, nationally accepted standards of minimum competency and testing. Use of the registration number also

promotes opportunity for clients to work directly with Interior Design Professionals on code-based interior projects thus reducing consumer costs by eliminating expensive, unqualified and /or incorrect document processing.

HB 5307 aligns Registered Interior Designers with the other major participants in the construction industry such as home improvements contractors and landscape designers who are also required to display their license. It also provides Building & Fire Officials with confidence that qualified individuals are submitting the appropriate non-structural plans, drawings and specifications for permitting purposes and assists municipalities in identifying qualified respondents in bidding procedures on local and/or state levels.

HB 5307 safeguards the public by creating accountability and credentials – offering consumer's legal recourse against negligent or unethical designers who violate the law and additionally provides consumers a venue for the redress of grievances.

Further, it identifies Registered Interior Designers who maintain high ethical standards and voluntarily partake in continuing education, a critical necessity in this fast-advancing field. It provides career development through professional partnership opportunities while ensuring that Registered Interior Designers will benefit from reciprocity when working on out of state projects.

In retro spec, allowing Registered Interior Designers to display their registration number far better serves the State's interest in protecting consumers. We ask that you support HB 5307.

Thank you.

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