



AIA Washington

724 Columbia St NW Suite 120
Olympia WA 98501-1291
www.aiawa.org
Wacouncil@aiawa.org

A Council of The American Institute of Architects

(360) 943-6012
1-800-722-0394
FAX (360) 352-1870

Interior Design Licensing Vote NO on Substitute House Bill 1878

BACKGROUND

The AIA/WA Council recognizes that it may be in the public interest for the state to reserve the use of specific titles for specialized design disciplines. However, state law requires that licensing and title protection should be enacted only when the lack of regulation of an industry or profession poses a clearly identified threat to the public health, safety and welfare.

DOL SUNRISE REVIEW RECOMMENDS AGAINST ID REGISTRATION

The Department of Licensing recently completed a “sunrise review” of the interior designers’ registration proposal. DOL concluded “that no state licensing be required for interior designers at this time because:

- a) there is a lack of evidence the consumer is being harmed;
- b) the public can be reasonably assured of initial and continuing professional ability; and
- c) the public can effectively be protected by current statutes and codes.” (page 2)

AIA/WA SUPPORTS REASONABLE STANDARDS FOR INTERIOR DESIGN REGISTRATION

Architects support efforts to raise the level of professionalism in the interior design industry and would not oppose a properly structured title-only regulation bill. In fact, the AIA/WA made every effort reach a compromise with the interior designers over the interim, but could not agree on a bill’s provisions. The AIA/WA would not oppose a title-only registration bill that did not expand interior designers currently authorized scope of practice, required a 4-year degree, a structured internship, passage of the complete NCIDQ exam and strict equivalency for those who seek registration through an alternative path.

SHB 1878 WEAKENS PUBLIC SAFETY STANDARDS

SHB 1878 would enact new restrictions on the interior design industry. However it proposes weak education standards and expands their scope of practice into aspects of architecture and engineering.

The AIA/WA has three specific concerns with SHB 1878. AIA/WA’s concerns are based on a duty to protect public safety and an accord previously signed with the interior design organizations (see the attached letter). The interior design groups now disavow the agreement, but the AIA still honors its provisions.

- **SHB 1878 threatens public safety by allowing unqualified interior designers to practice aspects of architecture and engineering.**
By defining interior designers as “registered design professionals” they would be allowed to approve and submit architectural and engineering construction documents for code approval. Interior designers are not educated or trained to practice in these areas of architecture or engineering.
- **SHB 1878 includes weak education requirements, allowing licensure without a degree.**
It allows people to become licensed with only two years of education and does not even require a degree. The nationally accredited standard is a 4-year professional degree. Washington State University and Cornish School of the Arts in Seattle offer accredited 4-year professional interior design degrees. **SHB 1878 would undermine these programs by allowing persons with much less education to claim they are equally qualified under state law.**
- **SHB 1878 includes permissive grandfathering.**
SHB 1878 allows persons to become licensed without a college degree and without passing the national exam, provided they have used the title “interior design” in their business. All persons seeking to be licensed should have an accredited degree, have completed a structured internship and have passed a national exam.

The AIA/WA urges you to oppose SHB 1878 as unnecessary regulation of the industry.