

Issue brief

AIA MA Priority Level

This is a High Priority bill

The Ask

Ask your legislator to oppose this bills

For more information

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SB 2408 – An Act relative to advancing the profession of commercial interior design

Sponsors: Joint Committee on Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure

Purpose

This bill would create a licensure requirement for commercial interior designers by requiring licensure for any commercial interior design work requiring a permit. It delimits work that would and would not fall under the licensure; requires each licensee to pass an exam set by the National Council for Interior Design Certification; establishes a continuing education requirement; prohibits the usage of the term 'registered' in conjunction with terms like 'commercial interior designer' except by licensees; direct a newly formed board of registration of commercial interior designers to specify membership qualification, required meetings, and procedures for approving a seal for use by licensees on plans and specifications; create the designation 'commercial interior designer emeritus' for those licensees who retire after ten years of practice, allow for expedited re-licensure but prohibit practice while so designated.

Comments

Among the 50 states, only Louisiana and Nevada currently have Practice Acts resembling the proposed legislation in Massachusetts, while 26 states have Title Acts, and 22 states have no regulations in place for the interior design profession.

States can regulate interior design in two ways: title registration and practice regulation. Title registration, which only governs the use of the title, is suitable when no severe public safety threat exists. In contrast, practice regulation is reserved for professions that could threaten public safety if unregulated. As only two states have enacted Practice Acts and 26 others regulate the title, AIA MA supports a title act as most appropriate.

There is no independent evidence to suggest a need for licensure in interior design. No known cases exist where a party has sought legal remedy due to improper interior design practice, which is the primary reason for state licensure.

By interior designers' own admission, they lack the same educational qualifications as architects or engineers. As a result, this bill would lower the public health, safety, and welfare standards and obscure who is responsible for maintaining these standards – namely, building officials – who also oppose the bill.

Lastly, the bill does not address the potential conflict of interest between interior designers and manufacturers of building products. Unlike architects and engineers, who are prohibited from having vested interests in their projects' products, this bill would enable interior designers to profit from specifying certain products.

