



Molly Bryant, IIDA LEED GA
The Columbus Architectural Studio
House Bill 504
Proponent testimony
House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee
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Chairman Young, Vice Chairman Riedel, Ranking Minority Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Ohio House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of House Bill 504, which creates permissive certification for the Interior Design profession.

My name is Molly Bryant, and I live in Columbus, Ohio. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Bowling Green State University, as well as a Master of Fine Arts in Design Development from The Ohio State University. I have obtained certification by the Council for Interior Design Qualification (CIDQ). I have served locally as a Columbus city center director for the Ohio Kentucky International Interior Design Association, as well as chapter president for our IIDA Ohio Kentucky board. I work full time at The Columbus Architectural Studio. We are an employee owned company where our team focuses on commercial architecture and interior design projects for the corporate office, multi-family, sports, and hospitality markets. In addition to my professional career, I am currently an adjunct professor at Columbus College of Art and Design where I teach Interior Design students a Professional Practice course.

I am grateful for this opportunity to demonstrate my support for House Bill 504 because I am passionate about what we practice as Interior Designers and I strongly feel that the passing of this bill is needed in the state of Ohio. As interior designers, we practice in our profession to support the overall health, safety, and welfare of the general public through the interior environments we design. However, the process in Ohio today most likely requires the sole proprietor contracted interior designer to either sub contract or gain approval from another design professional, either by approving the same work, or in some cases re-drawing the original plan. Unfortunately, this results in the interior design professional minimizing their hard work, creativity, and ultimately their design to another design professional. More importantly, this out-of-date process reflects the procedures established over 50 years ago, and because of its inefficiencies drives up cost because of duplication, as well as stifling competition in the marketplace. Over the last several decades interior design has evolved into a specialized aspect of the build process. This specialized area of expertise remains important in both the design of new and existing builds.



Currently, building owners and clients know that when they hire an interior designer for their project that the final product will result in a safe and regulatorily compliant environment. However, if an interior designer seeks the voluntary certification proposed in House Bill 504, building owners and clients will understand that this recognition will provide additional flexibility for the designer working on their behalf and potentially save them valuable time and money on their project. The Board of Building Standards will be charged with recognizing the permissive certification that could be sought by interior designers who are educated to practice to the highest industry standards.

Because of the nature of the term "interior design" what we do is often misunderstood by the general public. As one of the many trades represented "at the table" on a project site, by not having our work plans recognized as our own, our profession becomes discounted, thus inhibiting an interior designer to practice to their full capability.

In addition to our certification being recognized under the Board of Building Standards, I also feel that this bill will assist prospective design students by attracting them to Ohio's college and University design programs as well as encouraging new graduates to establish small businesses here and practice design in the state of Ohio. It should be noted that approximately 90% of people working in this industry are women, so these businesses will likely be minority and women-owned ventures. There are 27 other states, districts and territories that have some sort of professional recognition for interior designers. In states with some sort of professional recognition competition has increased and overall project costs are lower. An Ohio graduate with a degree in interior design has no reason to stay in Ohio because of the archaic laws that are in place. Not passing this bill sends the message to my students and my colleagues that the State of Ohio is not "open for business" for well-trained, educated interior design professionals. In my opinion, it is not in the state's best interest that upon graduation they should take their degrees to a more welcoming regulatory environment so that they may be allowed to practice to the full extent of their training.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the House Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee, thank you for your willingness to allow me to testify as a proponent of HB 504. As an educator and a practicing interior designer passing this bill will make a critical improvement to the future career I discuss with my students daily and help fill the identified employment need. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions that you or the committee may have.