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May 22, 2018

House Economic Development, Commerce, and Labor Committee

To: Chair Ron Young
Vice Chair Craig S. Riedel
Ranking Member Michele Lepore-Hagan

CC: Representative Steven Arndt
Representative Thomas Brinkman
Representative Bill Dean
Representative Ron Hood
Representative Larry Householder
Representative Brigid Kelly
Representative Al Landis
Representative Scott Lipps
Representative Alicia Reece
Representative Michael Sheehy
Representative Dick Stein
Representative Dick West

RE: HB 504

Dear Chair Young and committee members,

My name is Edwin Beltran, and I am a Principal with the architecture and design firm, NBBJ, in Columbus, Ohio. NBBJ is an industry leader and Interior Design Magazine ranks us as a top 25 design firm, in terms of design fees. I hold a Master's degree in Architecture from the Knowlton School of Architecture at The Ohio State University, and a Bachelor of Environmental Design degree from the University of Puerto Rico. I am NCDIQ (National Council of Interior Design Qualification) certified, and I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA). During my career, I have had the privilege to lead many interior design projects here in Ohio, across the United States and around the world. Within Ohio, I was the design lead for the Cleveland Clinic's Miller Family Heart & Vascular Institute and the Glickman Tower Urological and Kidney Institute; the new OhioHealth Neuroscience Center at Riverside Methodist Hospital; numerous recent additions at Nationwide Children's Hospital, including the Big Lots Behavioral Health Pavilion; the expansion and renovation work underway at Mt. Carmel East Hospital in Columbus and the Cardiac and Orthopedic tower at Premier Health's Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton. My interior design work in Ohio and around the world has been featured in numerous trade magazines and has been recognized with more than 20 awards from professional organizations, such as the American Institute of Architecture, the International Interior Design

Association and others. I offer my background to establish my passion for and experience in the interior design profession.

I write to you today to share that I fully support HB 504, which establishes a permissive certification of interior design professionals.

While I began my career 22 years ago in the area of architecture, I began to focus exclusively on interior design about 15 years ago because of the great personal and professional fulfillment that I derive from being able to create environments that shelter and host people at some of their most joyous and vulnerable moments. When I took the NCDIQ certification exam for interior designers, I came to fully appreciate how interior designers place the social, psychological, physical and emotional well-being of people at the center of everything that they do. Interior designers have more than technical expertise. We have and hone a deep understanding of how the utilization of space can enhance every aspect of daily life -- whether for work, life, play, education or health. Most importantly, interior designers share a collective purpose that fosters the transformational power of design to create places where people can thrive and feel welcomed, supported and inspired to reach their highest potential. Interior design is an important profession, and I support fostering its recognition, elevation and autonomy through HB 504.

HB 504 would not only establish a permissive certification, it would allow highly qualified certified interior designers the ability to submit their work for permits within their scope of work. Commercial interior design developed in the post-war era with the development of the cubicle by Herman Miller and creation of the modern office by female pioneers like Florence Knoll. Since it is a young profession, interior design suffers from unintended consequences of an older, overly broad state statute, by limiting the ability of a professional interior designer. In fact, it is not uncommon for interior designers to be the only unregulated profession on a construction or job site.

The built environment in general, and specifically interior design, requires a collaborative spirit to solve complex design issues. We work with architects, engineers, contractors, and skilled tradesmen on a daily basis to create, and re-create, functional and beneficial interior spaces. It is in this spirit, we worked with organizations that are touched by interior design, including the American Institute of Architects, to improve our bill based on their suggestions and concerns. We are proud that this bill does not impede anyone from pursuing their profession and expands economic opportunities for our profession.

As a board member of IIDA, we fully support permissive certification of interior design. We understand there are many paths to become an interior designer and many facets of the profession. As such, IIDA does not want to prevent anyone from entering the profession; we simply want to allow highly qualified design professionals the ability to work within their education and experience.

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Thank you for your time and for your consideration of my written testimony in support of HB 504.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin Beltran", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Edwin Beltran