



May 14, 2018

The Honorable Dorothy Pelanda
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus Ohio 43215

Dear Representative Pelanda:

The Ohio Restaurant Association is the leading trade association representing Ohio's restaurant industry, the state's third-largest, private sector employer generating \$20.9 billion in sales, more than \$1.5 billion in sales taxes annually, and employing nearly 575,000 Ohioans at 22,023 locations.

The purpose of this letter is to encourage ORA's support for House Bill 504, your bill to create a voluntary certification of commercial interior designers.

Foodservice is one of the growing economic engines in the state of Ohio, and our membership is diverse between large operators with multiple sites to the smallest family operated business. What our members' customers seek is a good, healthy meal, at a fair price in a setting that is comfortable and welcoming allowing families to reconnect and recharge in this busy world. ORA members strive to provide environments that foster this effort and many times this comes at great personal expense. Members attempt to implement in their restaurants the trends of the day, not just in food and drinks, but in interior stylings that will bring customers and their limited dining resources to their establishments. As such we observe many members performing interior "refreshing" of existing spaces or "finishing" of new build spaces in mixed use developments in which to create or expand their businesses.

Many ORA members utilize the services of interior designers for these commercial spaces because they can provide valuable input and design expertise to the visions of their clients. Interior designers are aware of the trends of the day, but more importantly, can provide valuable insight to the physical layout of the restaurant, accounting for lighting, wayfinding and "flow" for customers and staff. These small business owners are making significant investments in their businesses when they take on these efforts and any attempt to save a few thousand dollars is significant. House Bill 504 would allow our members to work with a certified interior designer to provide drawings and specifications to be used in construction of interior spaces without the need for a separate and additional reviews. This permissive ability is attractive to ORA members as a timesaver to diminish any delays of opening or reopening a restaurant; therefore, we are pleased to support House Bill 504.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Rosato".

Joe Rosato
Director of Government Affairs