



Copper Leaf
interior design studio

Testimony of Pamela S Holschuh, ASID

of Copper Leaf Interiors, Marietta, Ohio

to the

Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

regarding sales tax on interior design and interior decorating services

House Bill 49

March 2, 2017

Good morning Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee. My name is Pamela Holschuh and I am from Marietta, Ohio. I am testifying today in opposition to the expansion of the sales tax on the interior design and interior decorating profession.

I began my business 21 years ago, when I saw an opportunity that my community was lacking. I started Copper Leaf Interior Design Studio as a complete design firm that creates and manages design in commercial and residential projects. Being a designer is not just a passion of mine, it's a skill, a talent and expertise that I offer my clients to help improve their way of life. I am a 93 graduate of Ohio University, worked in other cities in Ohio before I moved to Marietta to create my business and raise my family. In 2002, I completed my Licensing through the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) and pay dues and pay for continuing education units that are required to keep my certificate. We travel to trade shows, and conferences to stay on top of technology, learn about advancements to green materials and fixtures to utilize in our projects. Over the years, my business has transformed and adapted to the way business has changed and

the way purchasing habits have changed. My business has been a retail establishment located in a historic district of Marietta, I have been involved in my community throughout the years, survived two floods and have prospered through 2008 and 2009, when many design firms were laying off employees, my business found ways to adapt and make it through. Despite other taxes my business has incurred, I have still grown my business over the years and employ 8 people at my firm. I indirectly employ other trades in our industry by implementing our designs and projects such as, contractors, plumbers, electricians, cabinetry shops, flooring companies, laborers for installation, painting, Graphic Design, Sign construction, the furniture industry and fabrication. My business also provides Pro Bono work through Color my Corner and Rainbow Babies Hospital in Cleveland. We extend our services to the Steven Stiller Tunnel to Towers Foundation to build homes for wounded Veterans. My business is a part of various Co-Op and internship programs at Design Programs such as, Ohio University, University of Cincinnati, CCAD, Kent State, and The Ohio State University. I have been recently appointed as Director at Large for the Ohio South Kentucky Chapter of ASID, and volunteer my time to continue to support our profession. Practicing Interior Design allows us to create spaces that are not only aesthetically pleasing, they meet life safety codes for egress, fire ratings for materials, developing layouts for interiors that are rated for fire safety, and being specifiers for green materials and fixtures that keep our carbon footprint low.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, often in our profession, what we do can be misinterpreted and can be seen by some as professionals with a sole purpose of simply making interiors look beautiful. Please know we don't just select fabrics and wall colors - our talents are what completes and details every space you walk in. Whether it is your home, your office, your favorite restaurant, schools, doctor's office, hotels, or historically preserving our own Ohio Statehouse. In these examples a Designer was involved and most likely lead the details of each of these projects.

There is no doubt that adding taxes to our profession will affect the way clients utilize our services. Specifically, Design services will not be used as often because they will be overlooked due to an increase in cost by adding a sales tax. Additionally, I believe our end users will find other ways to complete our services either by other professions who are not taxed, or in other creative ways in which designs will be compromised due to the lack of training and/or education. This no doubt would leave interior design to be led by untrained individuals for which layouts will be created that may not even meet basic fire code and other extremely important safety regulations. In addition, designs would be created without efficiencies and most likely lead to waste on every project. It is important to note that the relationship that an interior designer builds over time with our sub-contractors leads to the mutual goal of efficiency, cost savings, and most importantly public safety, which is valuable for not only the client but the public who may use those spaces.

Members of the Committee one other primary concern to me is that no other surrounding state to Ohio has a tax on interior design services, which would mean interior design services dollars leaving Ohio and going to places like Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. For me, and my eight employees on the border in Marietta, imposing a sales tax on interior designers would put my Ohio business at a serious competitive disadvantage. Given the already competitive nature and focus on best price and best value in our industry, Ohio's interior designers, including mine, would be seriously compromised in every corner of our state. It is for these reasons that I respectfully oppose the expansion of sales tax to Ohio's interior design services.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Ways and Means Committee I thank you for your time and allowing me to testify before you this morning. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have for me.