

AIA Pennsylvania

A Society of The American Institute of Architects



Testimony for the House Professional Licensure Committee Hearing on the HB2706

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Immediate Past President
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*AIA Pennsylvania is the statewide component of
The American Institute of Architects, and represents
over 2,800 architects in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*

*In representing, serving and communicating the interests of our local
chapters and individual members, AIA Pennsylvania promotes the profession
of architecture throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania while striving
for the highest quality in the built environment.*

Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) Testimony

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is John Hill. I am the immediate Past President of AIA Pennsylvania and currently serve as Chair of the AIA Pennsylvania Licensure Committee. I am a practicing architect registered in Pennsylvania and Vice President of Muhlenberg Greene Architects an eighteen member design firm in Reading. I also hold registrations in New York, New Jersey and Maryland and have a certificate from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB).

First, we would like to thank Rep. Biancucci for taking the lead in sponsoring this legislation. The American Institute of Architects adopted its current Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) policy for membership in 2001. Since that time, AIA Pennsylvania has been working, in partnership with the State Architects Licensure Board, to bring about the implementation of Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) for architects in Pennsylvania.

The AIA has long recognized the need for effective professional continuing education and believes that all architects should maintain a professional standard of competence. The underlying principle behind continuing education (also known as Mandatory Continuing Education, or MCE) is that professionals in our dynamic industry must remain current on products, methods and theories that allow them to create, maintain and improve upon our built environment. A commitment to maintaining professional competence through lifelong learning is critical for architects to meet the needs of a competitive worldwide economy and carry out their health, safety and welfare responsibilities.

Continuing education for the profession of architecture is a broadly structured process of education intended to support the continuous development of architects to maintain and enhance their professional competence. Continuing education should promote problem-solving and critical thinking. The AIA Continuing Education System (CES) was developed out of the AIA's commitment to the importance of lifelong learning. AIA/CES enables architects to keep abreast of current technologies, master new knowledge and skills, plan for the future, and responsibly meet the role society entrusts to a professional. This program allows members to fulfill a requirement for AIA membership that exceeds any of the state mandatory continuing education requirements currently in effect. In this role, the program has the potential to be a primary force in the improvement and revitalization of our profession.

Architects are uniquely qualified to work with the building code and other requirements and regulations associated with the design and construction industry. The fast pace of technological advances that effect the design industry and in particular the practice of architecture is challenging to everyone involved in planning and design. The changes impact every aspect of design and construction. Project delivery methods are changing, communication methods among design teams, contractors, and owners are evolving as

quickly as the digital world develops new software. Along with the increased pace in the changes in the structure of the industry, is the continual challenge of updates in building codes and review and approval processes for building projects. To effectively address the continual change in the industry and maintain a focus for the safety, health and welfare of the public, it is important that continuing education be included in the requirements for the licensure of architects in the Commonwealth. Fire resistive construction methods and materials, energy efficient design strategies, rehabilitation of existing structures, Building Information Management systems (BIM), sustainable design practices and green building construction are just a few of the many registered programs that are currently available continuing education programs.

Currently 38 States have MCE enabling legislation requirements in place. States such as Alaska, Hawaii, Utah, and Wisconsin are still in the process of defining their regulations and are trying to determine exactly what they will accept, from whom, and how their state will monitor the process. In Virginia a bill was passed during the 2006 legislative session which mandates that the Board implement a mandatory continuing education program for architects, professional engineers, and land surveyors (HB1054). The law became effective on July 1, 2006 and will be implemented in September 2008. States such as California, Maine, and Michigan are now considering taking the next step to require MCE for those architects licensed in their states.

NCARB

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) is a federation of all the state boards that register and govern the practice of architecture. The state boards formulate the rules and policies of NCARB. Working with the state boards, NCARB establishes national standards for certifying qualified architects. These standards have been recognized by the member state boards as adequately rigorous to allow the state board to issue certificates to practice architecture to the NCARB Certificate holder generally without further examination or other demonstration of their qualifications.

In increasing numbers, NCARB's member boards are requiring evidence of lifelong learning when architects apply for registration renewal. In addition to setting the standards for national certification, NCARB strongly recommends to state boards that continuing professional development be a requirement for registration renewal. NCARB has published legislative guidelines which advise state legislatures on how a state board may best operate, and has published white papers dealing with important regulatory issues affecting the practice of architecture.

Please note the following excerpt from NCARB's publication *Legislative Guidelines and Model Law: Model Regulations*

Continuing Professional Development Requirements

“A registered architect must demonstrate professional development activities since the architect's last renewal or initial registration, as the case may be; the Board shall by regulation describe professional development activities acceptable to the Board and the

form of documentation of such activities required by the Board. The Board may decline to renew a registration if the architect's professional development activities do not meet the standards set forth in the Board's regulations.¹"

Even though the issue has been discussed in the profession of architecture for more than 15 years, there is still a lot of debate over mandatory continuing education requirements (MCE). Three concerns always come up when the MCE issue is seriously debated. The issues revolve around time, money, and value. The issue that is frequently missed is that MCE is changing behavior and influencing which continuing education courses architects select.

When state licensing boards began to require mandatory continuing education, it changed the behavior of the architect, especially which courses they choose. For 25 years, the most popular, top 10 attended courses at the AIA National Convention have been marketing, presentation skills, working with clients, leadership, and how to improve your business practice. These are all good subjects and important to the architect's professional career. Only since the *majority* of the state licensing boards began requiring MCE have we see a change of what courses architects choose when attending the AIA National Convention. In 2007, the top 10 attended sessions started with Green Building, Preventing Moisture, Sustainable Design, America's New Regionalism, and 100 Years since the San Fran earthquake. Rarely were sessions attended on Sustainability and Health, Safety, and Welfare prior to 2000. If the state licensing boards want to change the behavior pattern of design professionals, mandatory continuing education is an effective way to do so.

All of the states surrounding Pennsylvania require mandatory continuing education for licensure renewal. The chart below outlines the requirements for each state.

MCE Requirements in Surrounding States

State	Total Hours Annually	HSW* Hours Annually	Distance Learning Accepted
Delaware	24 every 2 years	16 every 2 years	Yes
Maryland	24 every 2 years	16 every 2 years	Yes
New Jersey	24 every 2 years	16 every 2 years	Yes
New York	36 every 3 years	24 every 2 years	Yes 50% maximum
Ohio	24 every 2 years	16 every 2 years	Yes
Virginia**	16 every 2 years	16 every 2 years	Yes
West Virginia	12 every year	12 every year	Yes

*(HSW = Health, Safety & Welfare)

**will be implemented in September 2008

Studies suggest that under proper circumstances MCE is effective in changing attitudes, knowledge, and performance with improved public safety resulting from continuing education. Many other occupation and professions require continuing education. A 2004

¹ National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), *Legislative Guidelines and Model Law: Model Regulations, Section 100.703*

report developed by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, the pharmacists' counterpart to National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), and National Council of Examiners for Engineering & Surveying (NCEES), compared pharmacists and other healthcare professionals performance before and after participating in a variety of continuing education programs. At the time of the report, pharmacists licensed in 52 of the 53 jurisdictions throughout the United States and its territories were required to complete continuing education credits. The report documented the continued beneficial effects of the training for as long as one year afterward. This report concluded that continuing education served to improve knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior of the health professionals and the health outcomes of the patients.

In Pennsylvania, legislation was passed in 2006 requiring engineers, land surveyors and geologists to have continuing education credits in order to renew their license. **The Engineering, Land Surveyor and Geologist Registration Law** has been amended to include mandatory continuing education. The Board must promulgate regulations to establish requirements for continuing education.

SB612 is currently in the House Appropriations Committee after having been passed in the Senate 46-3 in June 2007. This legislation would increase the Continuing Education requirements for Landscape Architects from ten hours per two-year licensing period to 24 per two-year period.

In conclusion, I am here today to provide testimony to AIA Pennsylvania's support for implementing Mandatory Continuing Education (MCE) as a requirement for renewal of an architect's license to practice in this Commonwealth. It is an important aspect of professional development and a powerful statement of our profession's commitment to the safety and welfare of the public who assume the structures they live-in, work-in, shop-in, visit and entertain themselves-in, are safe for human habitation.

I am also here as a registered Architect in Pennsylvania with a practice that requires multi-state licensing. MCE is a requirement for the renewal of my other licenses as well as my membership in the AIA. I have found this requirement to be a normal part of my professional process. MCE serves a valuable purpose to my professional development, to other members of my firm and their development, and most certainly to my clients.

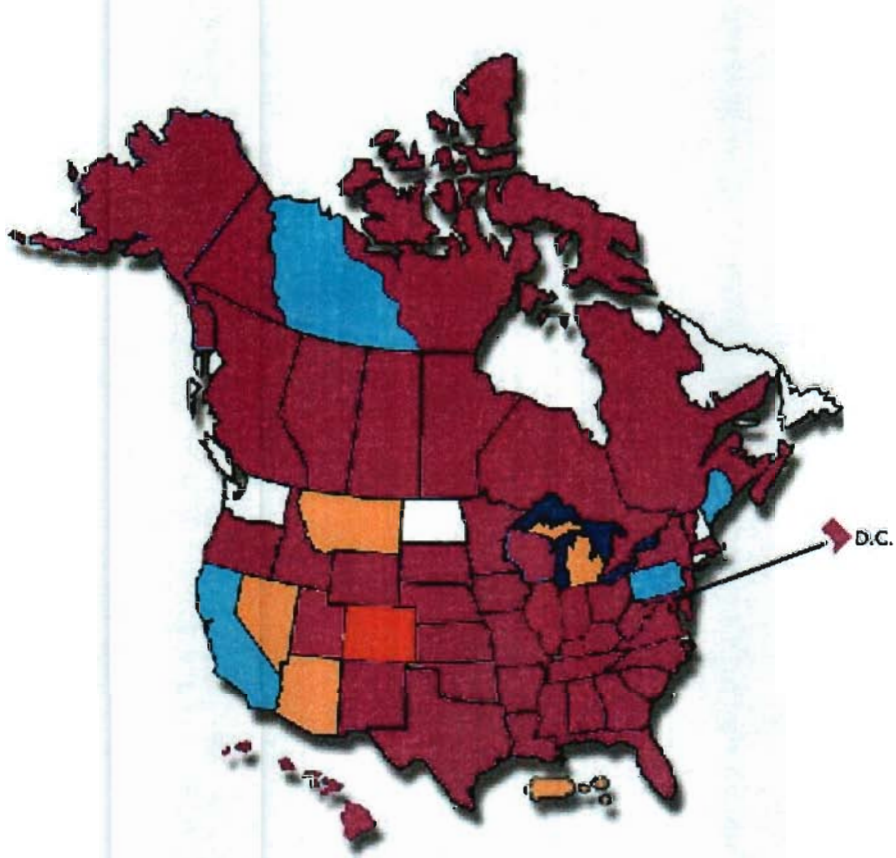
Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this hearing. If you need additional information, we would be happy to answer any questions you might have for us today. If in the future you need additional information, we would be happy to be a resource for you.

Sincerely,



John R. Hill, AIA
AIA Pennsylvania

OVERVIEW MAP of Mandatory Continuing Education



- MCE Requirement in Place
- Enabling Legislation in Place; Regulations Being Developed/ Discussed
- Enabling Legislation in Place; Not Implemented
- MCE Legislation Under Consideration