



JUN 09 2010

June 7, 2010

House Professional Licensure Committee
Rep. Michael McGeehan, Chairman
107 Irvis Office Building
P.O. Box 202173
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2173

Re: The General Assembly of Pennsylvania
House Bill No. 1521
State Board of Interior Designers Act

Dear Representative McGeehan:

Please consider this letter from the Bucks-Mont Chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) as testimony concerning PA House Bill No. 1521 - State Board of Interior Designers Act.

Most contractors, remodelers and other home improvement professionals often provide creative and technical solutions that are applied within a structure to enhance the quality and function of an interior space designed for human habitation, use or occupancy. In performing these tasks contractors, remodelers and other home improvement professionals would be impacted by HB 1521.

After careful analysis Bucks-Mont NARI has determined that it opposes PA HB -1521 on the following facts: this Act creates unnecessary *bureaucracy* without providing any value to the public, unnecessarily increases the cost to the consumer without providing additional value, is anti-competitive, will create the loss of jobs and contains discriminatory elements.

The purpose of this act is to protect all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania occupying public and private interior spaces by providing for professional interior design licensure.

To date there has been no demonstration of harm to the "public health, safety or welfare" to warrant increased governmental regulation of a profession which has, for so many years, operated without such interference. Since 1988, five state agencies have examined the need for titling and/or licensing laws for interior designers and all five found no benefit to the public, concluding that consumers already possessed the means to make informed decisions about

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interior designers and their services. There has been no evidence whatsoever that a failure to license interior designers has adversely impacted the consuming public.

Interior design title and practice act legislation is not being advocated by the public through consumer advocacy groups, attorneys general offices or divisions of consumer affairs.

Existing state and local laws and codes already afford the consumer with protection against unqualified persons performing construction and remodeling in the home. The Pennsylvania Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act and the EPA's Regulations on Residential Property Renovation at 40 CFR 745.80, Subpart E are just two examples of existing laws that protect our citizens. Building inspectors, code enforcement officials, licensed electricians, licensed plumbers and others all have a role in verifying that work performed by contractors meets the code and safety requirements enacted to protect the public. Additional licensure merely duplicates those efforts and creates another layer of bureaucracy and oversight without providing additional benefits to the consumer.

Bucks-Mont NARI believes that the consumer should be given a choice in retaining the services of professionals. Competence is best judged on the basis of the work produced rather than credentials alone. Our members wish to compete on the merits of their work and abilities and do so through their portfolios, references, design competitions, certification and continuing education. NARI educates the public as to the benefits of retaining the services of an NARI Member; we do not support efforts to limit freedom of choice among consumers by dictating who they can and cannot hire to perform design work. HB 1521 will increase the cost to the consumer as it always the result when competition is restricted.

Bucks-Mont NARI does not believe that only CIDA accredited schools are competent to train designers to practice their profession. Many of our members have been educated and trained in State Technical Schools and Community Colleges, which are not CIDA accredited. Aside from the many other educational institutions, which offer valid and relevant educational programs Bucks-Mont NARI supports various pathways of entry into the profession. NARI provide its members with many educational programs; one of which is a certification that is a challenging process, requiring extensive knowledge of the remodeling industry and a commitment to professional conduct. Even highly experienced and skilled remodelers find the screening and testing process formidable. Many people can acquire the necessary skills through extended work experience under the tutelage of qualified and experienced mentors or through shorter degree programs combined with other education. Many others have started in one area and evolved into competent practitioners in another.

Instead of protecting the public's health, safety and welfare HB 1521 is being pushed by a small group of designers who have a personal stake in limiting competition under the guise of "consumer safety" and are asking that the State give a select few a competitive and economic advantage over others, including contractors, remodelers, kitchen and bath designers and other home improvement professionals. Since HB 1521 does not achieve it stated purpose, does not

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create any public value, limits competition and impedes economic growth Bucks-Mont NARI opposes this legislation.

This testimony was created by Patrick M. Kennedy of Bucks-Mont NARI and approved by the Executive Committee of the Bucks-Mont NARI Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Wes Carver, CRS, Chairman
Greg Harth, CR, CKBR, President
John Gemmi, CR Vice President
Patrick Kennedy, Vice President
Gerald Greth, CR, CKBR , Secretary
Brian Zeldes, CR , Treasurer

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