

Name: Jeffrey Porter
Home Address: 6 Country Way
City, State, Zip: North Smithfield, RI 02896
Email: jporter@zds.com

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Re: Bill H7842 – An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions: State of Rhode Island Interior Design Practice Act

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations,

I am writing to express my strong support for **Bill H7842: An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – State of Rhode Island Interior Design Practice Act**.

My name is Jeffrey Porter, and I am a registered architect with **20 years of experience**. I **live North Smithfield and work in Providence, Rhode Island**, and I am committed to supporting professional standards that strengthen the design and construction industry in our state.

I am part of a broad consortium of **practitioners, educators, small business owners, and industry leaders across Rhode Island who are committed to advancing professional standards**. Interior design is a distinct profession focused on the **planning and design of interior environments that protect the health, safety, and welfare of occupants while supporting and enhancing the human experience**.

I view this legislation as a necessary step to ensure that interior design practitioners meet the qualifications required to make critical design decisions and recommendations that impact the public.

This bill will provide interior design professionals who fulfill **education, examination, and experience requirements** with:

- Greater professional autonomy and equity
- The ability to **stamp and seal non-structural interior construction documents**
- Alignment with our industry colleagues including **architects, engineers, and construction professionals**

Importantly, this legislation does not restrict the practice of current design professionals.

Interior designers working in commercial, healthcare, educational, and public environments are responsible for critical aspects of the built environment that directly affect occupant safety and well-being. These responsibilities include:

- Space planning and functional design
- Accessibility compliance
- Life-safety considerations
- Adherence to building and fire codes

- Material selections affecting indoor air quality and infection control
- Design decisions that influence occupant health and overall environmental quality

Currently, 29 states, as well as Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, have enacted legislation recognizing or regulating the profession of interior design. Within New England, **Connecticut and Maine** have established interior design legislation.

Passing this bill would help align Rhode Island with these jurisdictions to ensure:

- Consistent professional standards
- Stronger consumer protections
- Improved workforce mobility across state lines

This legislation affirms that qualified interior designers who meet established education, experience, and examination standards will take responsibility for code-compliant and safe interior environments. It will also provide clarity for building officials and allied professionals while supporting economic development within the design and construction industries.

As a registered architect **in the State of Rhode Island and Massachusetts**, I respectfully ask that you support Bill H7842 in recognition of the important role interior designers play in protecting the public and advancing the profession.

I would also add that I have had the opportunity to work with a number of interior designers throughout my years in the architecture and design sector. These designers understand the importance of life safety and building codes and already hold themselves accountable to ensuring that their work complies with the various regulations as laid out by the cities and towns of Rhode Island. I have worked in collaboration with these interior designers on many projects, and their designs and project documents already contain much of what is required in the responsibilities laid out above, just as I have done with structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, and civil engineers (all whom are held to these higher standards).

Thank you for your service to our state. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or discuss this legislation further.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Porter, RA, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP
North Smithfield, RI,
jporter@zds.com
401-497-5867