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Representatives: William W. Obrien, Sefano V. Famiglietti, Thomas J. Paolino, Arthur J. Corvese, Raymond A. Hull.

April 2, 2026

Re: H7842/ S2518 – An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions: State of Rhode Island Interior Design Practice Act

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporation,

I am writing to express my strong support for Bill H7842/ S2518: An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – State of Rhode Island Interior Design Practice Act.

My name is Kathryn Mancini and I am an NCIDQ #269703 certified Interior Designer with 39 years of experience. I have trained under the supervision of both registered architects and NCIDQ certified interior designers. During that training my education was enhanced and fine tuned to a higher level. My interior design expertise lies primarily within the commercial sector where every project requires the knowledge and execution of health safety and welfare code related requirements. I have been a resident of Lincoln, Central Falls and North Providence and have worked primarily for firms located in Providence, Rhode Island, however my projects span the east coast from Massachusetts to Delaware. My portfolio of projects includes commercial, government, municipal, education, and hospitality.

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. I am committed to the support of professional standards to strengthen the design community.

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 is non-restrictive and 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, fire codes 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. The first state to pass regulation for interior designers was Alabama in 1982 an astounding 44 years ago. It is time to bring RI into the current and protect the future for educated interior designers.

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 an interior designer in the State of Rhode Island, I respectfully ask that you support Bill S2518 / H7842 in recognition of the important role interior designers play in protecting the public and advancing the profession.

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

Sincerely,

Kathryn Mancini
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