

March 31, 2026

Representative Justine Caldwell
Representative Evan Shanley
Rhode Island House of Representatives
State House, 82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Opposition to HB 7842 — State of Rhode Island Interior Design Practice Act

Dear Representatives Caldwell and Shanley,

My name is Lauren Winsor, and I am the owner of House of Winsor Interiors, a residential interior design practice based in East Greenwich. I write to respectfully express my opposition to HB 7842, the proposed Interior Design Practice Act, which is currently held for further study by the Senate Commerce Committee and is scheduled for consideration by the House Committee on Corporations on Thursday, April 2nd. While I appreciate the sponsors' stated intent to protect the public, I believe this legislation as written would cause undue harm to small design businesses like mine — and that a narrower, more targeted approach would better serve both practitioners and the public.

My first concern is the reputational harm this bill would impose on experienced designers who lack a formal certification. By reserving the title "Registered Interior Designer" exclusively for NCIDQ certificate holders, HB 7842 would effectively signal to the public that all other practitioners — regardless of their years of experience, portfolio, or professional reputation — are operating at a lesser standard. For a small business built on trust and referrals, this distinction carries real commercial consequences. It is not merely a matter of semantics: when a prospective client sees that a competitor holds the protected title and I do not, the implication of inferiority is clear, even if the work tells a different story.

Second, I question whether the breadth of this regulatory framework is warranted in Rhode Island. Interior design is a relatively small profession within an already small state. The bill contemplates establishing a seven-member board, promulgating regulations, maintaining a public registry, conducting disciplinary hearings, and overseeing firm registration — an administrative apparatus that seems disproportionate to the scale of the industry it would govern. I am not aware of a pattern of consumer harm attributable to uncertified residential interior designers in this state that would justify such an expansive response.

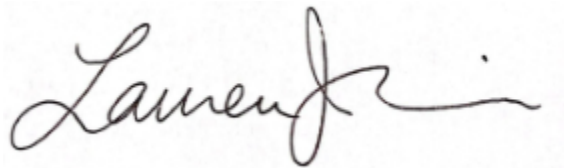
Third, I would note that the current system of professional collaboration is, in my experience, working well. On projects involving permitted construction, residential designers like me already work alongside licensed architects, professional engineers, and contractors who provide the code compliance expertise and permitting authority the law requires. This collaborative model provides meaningful checks without placing the

full burden of regulatory oversight on designers themselves. HB 7842 does not improve upon this structure — it layers an entirely new licensing regime on top of it.

I recognize that some designers do wish to expand their practice to include independent permit submissions, and I do not oppose giving qualified individuals that ability. However, I would urge the House to consider a narrower alternative that other states have adopted successfully: a Title Act paired with permitting privileges, rather than a full Practice Act. Under this model — enacted in states including Nebraska, Illinois, North Carolina, and Georgia — NCIDQ certificate holders may use a protected title and independently stamp and submit permitted construction documents, while all other designers remain free to practice and market themselves as interior designers without restriction. This approach rewards credentialing without punishing those who have not pursued it, and it avoids the creation of a costly regulatory board.

I am grateful that this bill has been held for further study, and I hope that this period presents an opportunity to engage the broader design community — including those without NCIDQ certification — before any legislation moves forward. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you or your staff directly about these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lauren Winsor". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Lauren Winsor

Owner, House of Winsor Interiors
East Greenwich, Rhode Island