

March 10, 2026

Senate Commerce Committee
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI
02903

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

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Commerce Committee,

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

My name is Charlie Cannon and I am a Professor of Industrial Design at the Rhode Island School of Design where I have taught since 2008, a design consultant, and cofounder of a former architecture firm that worked in Rhode Island and New York for 10 years.

I live in Providence and I support 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 the state 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.

As with current registration requirements for architects, 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 designer and educator in 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 our state. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or discuss this legislation further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Cannon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charlie Cannon
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& Design Consultant
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