



Erin Nardelli
519 Putnam Pike Gloucester, RI 02814
erinnardelli219@gmail.com

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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 Erin Nardelli, and I am a Senior Interior Designer practicing in Rhode Island with seven years of professional experience. I graduated from Drexel University in 2018 with a degree in Interior Design. While in school, I completed a six-month cooperative education placement with Bisbano + Associates in Providence, where I later worked full time for three years following graduation. During that time, I worked on commercial, retail, and hospitality projects across Rhode Island and throughout New England.

In 2021, I completed and passed the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) examination and have maintained my certification since. The NCIDQ represents the profession's highest standard of competency and reflects rigorous requirements in education, experience, and examination.

I currently work at Taniya Nayak Design, where I have been for the past five years and now serve as a Senior Interior Designer. Our firm works on projects across the country and across a variety of project types, including both residential and commercial interiors. This has given me a unique perspective within the profession, as I regularly work in both sectors. Because of this experience, I strongly support this legislation and appreciate that it has been written thoughtfully to recognize professional qualifications without restricting the work of residential or aesthetically focused designers. As someone who practices in both residential and commercial environments, I understand the importance of legislation that strengthens professional recognition while respecting the diverse ways designers practice.

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.

Throughout my career, I have worked closely with architects, engineers, contractors, and other design professionals to bring projects from concept through construction. This past fall, I completed the design of Yellow Door Taqueria in downtown Providence, a restaurant project that required extensive coordination with contractors, engineers, and project stakeholders throughout the design and construction process. Projects like this not only require careful attention to building codes and life-safety considerations, but also contribute to the continued growth and vibrancy of Providence's small business and hospitality community. Experiences like this highlight the integral role interior designers play in shaping safe, functional, and successful commercial environments that serve the public.

As a practicing interior designer 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 time and for your service to the people of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,



Erin Nardelli, NCIDQ, LEED Green Assoc.
Senior Interior Designer