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Testimony of

Christopher Carlozzi, NFIB State Director
In Opposition to Senate Bill No. 2518
Relating to Business and Professions – State of Rhode Island Interior Design Practice Act
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce
March 10, 2026

Chairman Britto and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce:

My name is Christopher Carlozzi. I am the Rhode Island State Director for NFIB. A non-profit, non-partisan organization, NFIB is the nation's and our state's largest small business advocacy group. In Rhode Island, NFIB represents hundreds of small and independent business owners involved in all types of industry, including manufacturing, retail, wholesale, service, and agriculture. The average NFIB member has five employees and annual gross revenues of about \$450,000. NFIB represents the small Main Street business owners from throughout Rhode Island. On behalf of those small and independent business employers, I urge you to oppose Senate Bill No. 2518 relative to interior designer licensure.

Interior design is an entry level entrepreneurial opportunity for many who want to use their skills to help neighbors and friends and build a new business. Other interior designers have spent years obtaining experience, building a clientele, and establishing a profitable business without formal training or certification. Neither situation presents a threat to the public health or safety, which is necessary to justify licensing or state regulation.

Designers include such disparate specialties as commercial foodservice equipment designers, office furniture designers, lighting designers and cabinetmakers. Designers work independently, with other designers in a designer firm, for home improvement stores or other retailers, or for architectural firms, among many different arrangements. In short, state regulation of the interior design industry is unnecessary, anti-competitive and can only result in the further suppression of job growth in Rhode Island.

Licensing requirements are by their nature barriers to entry for entrepreneurs. In fact, licensing requirements are often designed to be barriers for new practitioners, although promoted as consumer protection measures. In 2015, the Obama administration called on states to review licensing to make sure that excessive barriers to entry for entrepreneurs have not been erected. "The current licensing regime in the United States creates substantial costs, and often the requirements for obtaining a license are not in sync with the skills needed for the job. There is evidence that licensing

requirements raise the price of goods and services, restrict employment opportunities, and make it more difficult for workers to take their skills across state lines.” *See Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policymakers, July, 2015.*

Interior design has historically encompassed a wide diversity of practitioners responding to a wide range of consumer demands for services. These bills’ requirements, produced and promoted by industry elites, would be imposed without any appreciable evidence of consumer demand or need for government protection to the economic detriment of many, including practitioners, consumers and the Rhode Island economy as a whole. And there will be a more significant negative impact on minority communities, women, second career seekers and career switchers, to say nothing of increased costs to consumers as competition is reduced.

This proposal is a solution looking for a problem. NFIB believes strongly that the state has enough real and substantial problems that need to be addressed by government. The regulation and licensure of a person freely and/or competitively hired to give advice as to the color of the drapes or walls or the purchase and placement of furniture whether in a home or a state office is not one of them. I urge you to oppose Senate Bill No. 2518. Thank you.