

AIA MASSACHUSETTS

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Registration and Certification of Interior Designers

Action Sought

The Boston Society of Architects and AIA Massachusetts strongly urge legislators to oppose the MIDC's interior design registration bill (S.B. 178) and consider interior design certification (H.B. 341) as an alternative.

BSA opposition to interior design practice registration bill (S.B. 178)

- Life safety: The BSA opposes any form of legislation that could put public life safety at risk. Architects are educated, trained, and registered to design the inside and the exterior of a building as a unified whole. Experience has shown that this inclusive approach to building design is the best way to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. To change the current system through a practice act such as S.B. 178, there should be compelling evidence of an unmet need to protect the public, compelling evidence that the public would be better off if building design were fragmented in this way, and compelling evidence that the education, training, examination, and ethics of registered interior designers truly protect that public need. There is no evidence that the far-reaching requirements of S.B. 178 would truly protect public life safety.
- Stamping of drawings and issuance of building permits: Under current law, the purpose of stamping drawings by architects and engineers is to assure the building inspector that a licensed professional has addressed life safety issues, prior to the issuance of the building permit. S.B. 178 would create a system by which interior designers, who are not trained or licensed to address life safety issues, will also be stamping drawings – even though interior design drawings are not required for the issuance of a building permit. Confusion on this critical point could endanger public life safety.
- Ethics / conflict of interest: The bill does not require a registered interior designer to inform his or her client that the designer is being paid by suppliers, rather than by the client (unlike the architectural registration act, which mandates such disclosure).

BSA proposed interior design certification bill (H.B. 341)

Certification based on education, training, examination, and ethics. The BSA has proposed a certification bill that distinguishes qualified professional interior designers from non-professionals, based on their education, training, examination, and ethics. Only those who meet the standards of the law can use the term “certified interior designer.” The law does not require the stamping of drawings, or restrict practice in any way.