

February 4, 2010

Honorable Michael Gerber
105A East Wing
PO Box 202148
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2148

**RE: Please Support House Bill 1521
For Interior Design Licensure**

Dear Representative Gerber,

As a constituent living in your district, I am writing to ask that you support Bill 1521 for the licensing and regulation of the Interior Design profession.

Interior Designers have specialized education, training and experience that distinguishes these professionals from architects and those interested in interior decoration. This specialized skill set and knowledge base is vital when working on public commercial and institutional buildings. Interior Designers complement and add to the knowledge base of both architects and engineers (both registered professionals) and they work collaboratively with these professionals when designing the built environment that the citizens of Pennsylvania utilize every day. Specifically Interior Designers deal with Health, Safety and Welfare (HSW) issues that are critical parts of the built environment. Examples include:

- **Fire Prevention** | flame spread ratings and smoke development ratings of all finishes in buildings
- **Slip & Fall Safety** | correct specification of all finishes including flooring
- **Acoustics** | sound attenuation creates spaces, such as classrooms, that function as intended
- **Accessibility & ADA Codes** | impacting space planning and the design / documentation of millwork, rest rooms, furniture, etc...
- **Occupancy & Egress** | occupant loads, egress widths and minimum clearances between fixtures & furniture
- **Energy Conservation** | minimum lighting levels and maximum energy use requirements

As a licensed architect that has worked with Interior Designers for over 25 years, I rely on the specialized knowledge and advice these professionals provide on a project just as I do with structural and mechanical engineers. Interior Designers work alongside other registered professionals and they should be licensed and regulated accordingly.

Some groups including the AIA (American Institute of Architects) Pennsylvania Chapter are opposed to this legislation under the auspices that Interior Designers do not protect the Health, Safety and Welfare (HSW) of the public. This argument is incorrect. Interior Designers deal with the HSW issues noted above every day. As an architect I believe the real motivation of the AIA in opposing this legislation is to restrict trade and limit the number of professionals providing design services in Pennsylvania. If Interior Designers were to obtain licensing, there would be a greater number of professionals able to start independent businesses and consumers of design services (typically businesses) would benefit by increased choice and competition in the industry. Essentially architects are trying to limit competition by opposing this bill.

Please support bill 1521. If you have any questions on how Interior Design licensing can positively impact Pennsylvania please contact me.

Sincerely,

Mark G. Cahill, AIA