

January 18, 2024

Alaska House Labor and Commerce Committee

email: House.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov; Representative.Jesse.Sumner@akleg.gov;
Representative.Justin.Ruffridge@akleg.gov; Representative.Mike.Prax@akleg.gov;
Representative.Dan.Saddler@akleg.gov; Representative.Stanley.Wright@akleg.gov;
Representative.Ashley.Carrick@akleg.gov; Representative.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov;

Re: OPPOSITION to HB 159 An act to register Interior Designers and Interior Design

Dear Chair Sumner and members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee,

I am writing to express my earnest OPPOSITION to House Bill 159.

As a licensed architect who has worked closely throughout the state with building owners and builders, I have a firm grasp of the harmful impact this bill would have on our design and construction industries.

I have served as the President of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Alaska Chapter and currently represent Alaska on the AIA National Strategic Council. I am also an active Licensing Advisor for the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB). These roles allow me the opportunity to work with design professionals from around the country, access research done by NCARB and AIA on this topic, and analyze how other jurisdictions have responded to the question of interior design regulation.

Based on reviewing the information available, it is evident to me that HB 159 is an attempt to use Alaska as a testing ground to advance the special interests of the national level organization that issues the specific exams and certificates required by this bill. It is no surprise that they are so deeply invested in finding a foothold by promoting this legislation.

No other state or jurisdiction in the country regulates such a far-reaching scope of interior design practice or goes as far to restrict the freedoms of building owners, contractors, tenants, and designers to renovate interior spaces. This bill would drastically reduce everyone's options for accomplishing simple interior updates by requiring a license from one of about twenty people, many of whom you have undoubtedly already heard advocating for this bill. Supporters of this bill tend to have at least one thing in common - they or their business interests will benefit in a restricted market.

To be clear, I have no underlying disagreement with the practice of regulating professions and business in the best interest of the community. In building design, we commonly refer to this as protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. While we do have the occasional roof collapse from snow or fire in a building, what we do not have in Alaska is a gap in our current regulation related to interior design currently putting the public at risk. HB 159 simply isn't responding to a need for improved safety, there is no problem to solve.

I urge you to protect local building owners, contractors, designers, and regulators from being part of an outside special interest experiment.

Please OPPOSE House Bill 159 and feel welcome to reach out if you would like more information.

Sincerely,



Ryan N Morse, AIA, NCARB

cc: AIA Lobbyist dianneblumer@gmail.com