

4/24/2023

Representative Jesse Sumner
Chair, House Labor and Commerce Committee
Alaska State Legislature

Chair Sumner, members of the committee,

My name is Matthew Barusch, Director of Government Affairs with the Council for Interior Design Qualification (CIDQ). I write to you today in support of House Bill 159, which would protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public if passed.

Our organization develops and administers the three-part NCIDQ Examination, the national interior design certification examination. Like the architecture profession, NCIDQ-Certified Interior Designers are required to undergo formal postsecondary education and thousands of hours of paid, supervised experience to sit for the examination, which tests interior designers' knowledge of core competencies required for professional practice in the industry. This combination of education, experience, and examination helps ensure minimal competency of our certificate holders in the distinct practice of interior design, most of which practice in commercial, code-based environments like office buildings, hotels, hospitals, schools, etc.

In December 2021, the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB), the national organization that administers the exam for architect licensure of which the Alaska AELS Board is a member, and CIDQ issued a [joint report](#) that assesses areas of correlation and distinction between the knowledge, skills, and tasks required for competency in the fields of architecture and interior design. This collaborative effort identified several areas of definite similarity between the professions and their respective examinations, as well as areas where there is some similarity or no similarity, and consequently [found that](#): ***“architecture and interior design are unique and distinct disciplines that both have an important role in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public within the built environment.”***

As stated by the [Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation](#): *“The unregulated practice of interior design presents at least a moderate risk of public harm. The involvement of other regulated design professionals or building codes and inspections may not be sufficient to mitigate potential hazards to public health, safety, and welfare.”* In short, legal recognition of interior designers as design professionals is necessary to protect the public from incompetent practice, which the exam cannot do on its own without state oversight. State oversight of interior designers utilizing the NCIDQ Exam offers the state and the public assurance that interior designers are qualified to practice in a manner that protects the public.

Passing this legislation would ensure that interior designers that are registered with the state are qualified and help protect public safety in Alaskan public spaces. CIDQ thanks Senator Claman for introducing this legislation and we ask the committee to vote yes on this bill. I'm happy to be a resource to the committee to answer questions about our exam.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Barusch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Barusch
Council for Interior Design Qualification