



July 10, 2007

The Honorable Michael Morrissey and Michael Rodrigues
Joint Committee of Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure
State House, Room 43
Boston, MA 02133-1008

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 178, Interior Design Certification and Licensure

Dear Senator Morrissey and Representative Rodrigues:

On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts (AGC), I want to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 178, an act to license interior designers. This legislation creates confusion in the design and construction process that poses a significant risk to public safety.

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 most life safety issues, also will be stamping drawings — even though interior design drawings are not required for the issuance of a building permit. Confusion on this critical point endangers public life safety.

Any form of legislation that could put public life safety at risk is unacceptable. Architects are educated, trained, and registered to design the inside and the exterior of a building as a unified whole and engineers have similar knowledge relative to their specializations. 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.

Thank you for your consideration on this crucial issue. The AGC is a 73 year-old trade association representing 235 construction firms performing the majority of the commercial, institutional and vertical public building in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Petrucelli,
President & CEO

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