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Testimony of Alicia Snyder-Carlson
Before the Joint Committee On Ways and Means
SubCommittee On General Government
Thursday February 27th, 2014

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner Hayward and Smith and Members of the Committee:

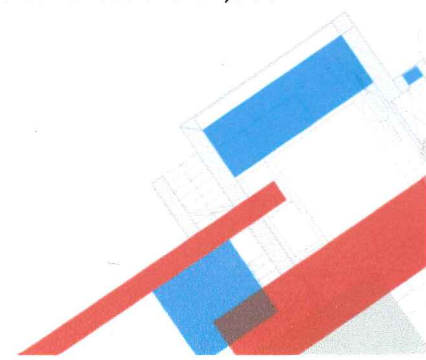
Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak with you today regarding the working group amendment of the proposed senate bill 1521. My name is Alicia Snyder-Carlson and I am here today on behalf of the Oregon Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designer and the Interior Design Collaborative of Oregon, which represents several hundred design professionals from both ASID (and IIDA), and has been active in the State of Oregon for over 10 years. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 1521 and the positive impact that it will have on the interior design profession

Establishing a working group to clarify the registration process for Commercial Interior Designers to practice commercial interior design to the fullest extent of their qualifications will not only create a long term solution for job growth in the built environment in the State of Oregon, but it will define a scope of work that will align the state with the Federal model of the Government Services Administration (GSA) - which allows interior designers that meet the minimum competency levels to work in buildings covered by the National Fire Protection Agency, the International Code Council, the U.S. Access Board, and the Americans with Disabilities Act to bid on federal projects.

In the current state of affairs here in Oregon, the lack of a clear definition for the scope of work that an interior designer may perform has negatively impacted our ability to make a profit and grow as a profession. Currently, qualified interior design professionals are being restricted in their ability to offer their full scope of services due to a square footage and occupancy change constraint that requires interior design professionals to seek an architect's stamp and seal of approval for non-exempt buildings.

Exempt and non-exempt buildings are clearly defined in both the architects' and engineers' law. Under current law, an unregistered individual may prepare plans and specifications for an interior space if a building is under 4,000 square feet and does not exceed 20 feet in height and no change in occupancy. These requirements completely limit the design professional's scope of practice.

For example, if an interior designer wants to remodel an 1,200-square-foot space office space within an existing 10,000 square foot commercial office building and no change in occupancy, even though the space being remodeled is less than 4,000



square feet, due to the total structural size of building, an interior designer would need the stamp approval of an architect.

Another example would be the remodeling of a 4,000 square foot home into breakfast cafe. The home's structure is perfect and it meets minimum fire and safety code standards. There are no structural modifications being proposed, however due the classification change of the structure, this project would also be non-exempt under the current law, therefore requiring a qualified interior design professional to seek the stamp of an architect in order to move forward with the project.

The interior design professional has the qualifications to work in these spaces, spends time and resources specifying the interior space of these projects, yet the building official cannot accept interior designer's drawings unless they are stamped by an Oregon registered architect or engineer.

By establishing a work group to define a registration process provides many benefits to the citizens of Oregon. This includes providing the ability of Registered Interior Designers to establish small businesses that offer a full scope of services without going through the costs of approval from architects or engineers, which will in turn allow for interior design professional to hire more workers, increase payrolls, and contribute to the tax base. Comprehensive interior design certification will increase a healthy market competition and will reduce consumer costs by increasing consumer choice. We urge you to enhance interior designer certification and the robust design industry it creates.

Specifically, we believe this legislation will;

- **Expand Small Businesses:** This bill would effectively allow over 500 practicing interior design professionals to reduce the cost of design to the government and expand the scope of their businesses. These individuals will be able to increase their client base and create a competitive design market to an already dynamic economy.
- **Ensure Consumer Protection:** Interior design professionals are well qualified to bid on state contracts due to the same certification requirements that provide a defense against fraud and abuse. Further, allowing interior designers to participate in the design selection process will maintain needed consumer safeguards; such as abiding by all fire and safety code regulations.
- **Enhance Student's Future:** Oregon's public and private universities, such as the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, George Fox, Marylhurst University, and The Art Institute of Portland issue bachelor's degrees while the University of Oregon offers a master's program. These new professionals seeking employment rely on the ability to practice the profession through opportunities provided by training in the classroom and certification upon graduation. Permitting interior designers to be involved in the design selection process will broaden opportunities for students enrolled in the interior design programs throughout

Oregon.

- **Increase State Revenue:** Passage of this bill will allow interior designers to establish small businesses that offer a full scope of services, hire new workers, provide student internships, increase payrolls, and contribute to the tax base all while reducing costs to the state of Oregon. Overall, the interior design profession in Oregon has created a robust design industry that employs thousands of Oregon residents and currently contributes over \$150 million to the economy annually.

Finally, on behalf of the ASID Oregon Chapter and IDC-Oregon, we urge you to pass this bill and create a working group in order to expand recognition of the profession, unbind the currently restricted scope of work, allow all qualified professionals to be a part of the full design bid selection process, safeguard consumers, protect our students' future, increase the state's revenue, and assist small business owners to grow. Oregon would join the 28 other states across the country that currently have Interior Design Laws.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any additional questions, I would be happy to answer them.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Alicia Snyder-Carlson'.

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