



ARCHITECTURE
INTERIOR DESIGN

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March 27, 2025
House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2141-1 - The Registered Commercial Interior Design Title Act

In order to understand the need for legislative recognition of Commercial Interior Design, we must universally understand what Commercial Interior Designers (CIDs) do, and the value they bring to their work. Most of the general public (and unfortunately some fellow industry professionals) believe that our work is purely creative or subjective; that we select paint colors and decorative cushions for the sake of aesthetics, or trend, or personal taste. The truth is that our work is much more rooted in technical knowledge, with an emphasis on critical aspects of our built environment that ensure spaces are safe, equitable, accessible, and code compliant for its occupants.

The CIDQ (Council for Interior Design Qualification) and NCARB (National Council of Architectural Registration Boards) published a joint report in 2021 titled "A Comparison of Practice Analysis Defined Competency Requirements for the Architecture and Interior Design Professions." In this report, they found that over 70% of the subject matter tested in both professional examinations (ARE and NCIDQ, respectively) overlap. Some of this overlapping content includes the development of technical documentation (including for permitting purposes), programming and analysis (including due diligence, such as code analysis), sustainable design and systems, and so much more. The 30% of the NCIDQ exams that does **not** overlap includes conducting post-occupancy evaluations, performing accessibility compliance evaluations, study of human factors (ergonomics, anthropometrics, and proxemics), sensory considerations, universal design, and special population considerations (ie Aging in Place, pediatric, and special needs). A bachelor's degree in an accredited, 4+ year program is a prerequisite for NCIDQ, as are years of professional experience.

Commercial Interior Designers are already providing highly skilled, technical work within many Architecture firms throughout our state. However, our lack of legal recognition and legitimacy stifles opportunities for sole practitioners and small businesses, who are so often women-owned. Highly qualified CIDs in our state are left up to local building code officials to interpret what a "Registered Design Professional" is versus *is not* when reviewing permit drawings for exempt (non-structural interior) work, leaving the door open for discrimination and lack of equal opportunity.

I am a born and raised Oregonian and am very proud to provide services that better my community in Portland and throughout Oregon. As a University of Oregon School of Architecture alumni, I've always been passionate about setting roots in this state and striving to make our built environments better, safer, and more welcoming for all. I fear that our lack of legislation not only stifles growth opportunities for fellow CIDs, but dissuades incoming talent from other states (30 of which have similar legislation to HB 2141) and possibly even new generations from studying Interior Design.

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The value that Commercial Interior Designers bring to our communities cannot be overstated. It is time that the State of Oregon recognize the highly skilled, important work we do by supporting HB 2141-1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janell Widmer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Janell Widmer, IIDA

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