



3/2/2023

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, members of the committee,

My name is Matthew Barusch, Director of Government Affairs for the Council for Interior Design Qualification. Our organization administers the NCIDQ exam, the national certification for interior designers in the US and Canada, and the prerequisite examination for interior design registration in Maryland. I write to you today to ask for your support of SB 714 and to offer our assistance to the General Assembly as it considers this important legislation.

The NCIDQ Exam is a minimal competency assessment that assures the state and the public that interior designers are qualified to practice in a manner that protects health, safety, and welfare. We administer the exam to offer the public assurance of competency because the unregulated practice of interior design presents a risk to public safety, and the involvement of other design professionals may not be sufficient to mitigate that risk. Our certificate holders regularly address design and construction elements that directly affect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, such as fire and life safety, building codes, ADA compliance, emergency egress, and much more. Most NCIDQ certificate holders practice in commercial, code-based environments like office buildings, hotels, hospitals, schools, etc. Reasonable regulation of interior design helps support public protection by ensuring that practitioners are qualified and competent to work independently in these spaces.

Due to interior designers' substantial impact on health, safety, and welfare, interior design is currently regulated in 28 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Interior design regulation is important to provide the public with access to qualified and competent practitioners and accountability for malpractice and recourse for consumers negatively affected by incompetent practice. CIDQ is not an enforcement or sanctioning body, therefore passage of the exam is not a substitute for regulation. The Maryland Board of Interior Design has performed that function since the inception of the Maryland Certified Interior Design Act in 1991, fulfilling the state's commitment to protecting the public through reasonable interior design regulation. Passage of SB 714 would continue that protection and allow CIDQ to continue to support the important work of the Maryland Board of Interior Design.

We thank the Committee for considering this important legislation and ask that you support SB 714. If you have any questions about the NCIDQ examination, please contact me at mbarusch@cidq.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Barusch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Matt Barusch
Director, Government Affairs and Advocacy

**225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 210, Alexandria, VA 22314
202-721-0220**