

The Unintended Economic & Safety Consequences of HB 27 & SB 1640

SLOWER PERMITTING & CONSTRUCTION PROCESS



- Instead of a stamp, similar to that of architects and engineers (and, currently, registered interior designers), HB 27 and SB 1640 require interior designers to show **“written proof”** of passage of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification Exam or its California Equivalent to submit documents for permit.
- This stamp is unequivocal, easily-recognizable proof to building code officials that the individual submitting construction documents is competent and qualified **by the State** to submit plans for permit.
- Verification, by permitting departments, of the legitimacy of this “written proof” will add **time and bureaucracy** to Florida’s permitting process.
- A 2014 study conducted by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) reported 80% of building code officials will **retire** between 2014 and 2029. Building offices across the country are currently **overworked, underfunded, and understaffed** with a backlog of permit applications. Any added steps to verify competence to submit construction documents will further decelerate the permitting process.
- Adding needless bureaucracy to the permitting process will **slow construction** for all professionals and businesses that require construction permits and will harm the Florida construction economy.

LESS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL BUSINESS INTERIOR DESIGNERS AND SUPPORTED INDUSTRIES

- 97% of interior design firms in Florida are **small businesses** of four or fewer practitioners.
- Approximately 75% of interior designers are **women**.
- Without the ability to obtain permits in a **timely and efficient** manner, interior designers will be forced to slow down their work intake, meaning less project completions and less revenue.
- In Florida, every one interior design job supports 0.92 additional jobs in the state. Every \$1 in interior design revenue can generate \$0.47 in other industries.
- **“Licensed Design Professional”** is a very common personnel requirement in many public and private/corporate design and construction “Requests for Proposals” and contracts across the State. Interior designers will no longer be licensed design professionals if HB 27 and SB 1640 pass.
- Proponents of HB 27/SB 1640 claim that the market will force these RFPs and contracts to reflect the new law.
- How long will it take, if ever, for the market/employers/procurement officers to acclimate to this new law?
 - Per the US SBA, **1/5 of business startups fail** in the first year.
 - **50% of employer establishments fail** in first 5 years.

PICKING WINNERS & LOSERS MEANS LESS CONSUMER CHOICE

- There are **three licensed design professionals** in the interior built environment in Florida: Engineers, Architects, and Interior Designers.
- Consumers look to licensed professionals, like licensed contractors, because those professionals have the **government’s “stamp of approval”** and the possibility of recourse for negligent or substandard work through complaints to a regulatory board or other agency.
- **The State of Florida and local Florida governments promote working with licensed professionals.**
- Most consumers (government and private) **prefer to contract with licensed individuals.**
- Because licensed architects and engineers are also capable of doing interior design work, naturally, consumers will gravitate towards the other two licensed professionals thereby taking away work that might have otherwise gone to licensed interior designers.
- Less choice, generally, means **higher fees and prices.**

GREATER PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, & WELFARE RISK

- Commercial interior design in regulated public spaces requires **conformance with the Florida Construction, Accessibility, & Safety Codes.**
- The Florida interior design license and the term “Registered Interior Designer” is a signal to both government and private consumers that the practitioner is **educated, trained, and examined** to do design work in public spaces.
- Without the license, commercial consumers will not have a state-granted indicator as to who is and who is not competent to engage in **potentially-dangerous** design work in **high-occupancy spaces.**
- With more than 422,997 hotel and motel rooms at over 4,518 properties, 685 nursing homes, and more than 3,089 licensed assisted living facilities in the State, **Florida should continue to license commercial interior designers to work in these new and renovated public spaces.**