

Michigan lawmakers trying to establish unnecessary interior design license

We'd be one of only a handful of states requiring this special permission to work

By Jarrett Skorup | October 2024

Only two states and the District of Columbia require a license to work as an interior designer. Michigan lawmakers are trying to bring the state into that group.

House Bill 5960, sponsored by Rep. Carol Glanville, D-Walker, would require individuals helping design the layout, fixtures and furnishings of a house, school or commercial building (with exceptions) to go through an accredited interior design program, pass a test and regularly complete 12 hours of continuing education.

This bill is unnecessary. It is written in a confusing manner, with a large number of exceptions for a variety of current jobs and associations. A person trying to put together an interior layout will have a hard time figuring out whether he or she needs to comply with the law. HB 5960 mostly serves as a vehicle to establish a board that would

empower established designers to restrict their own competitors.

It is important to understand that licensing laws are primarily put in place because individuals in that industry advocate for them in order to block

competition. Licensing laws establish fees, tests and training hours that limit the number of people eligible to work in a field.

These may be justified if the license requirements are shown to establish standards that actually protect the public. But they rarely do.

Despite the claims of some in the industry, interior design has nothing to do with public health or safety. When Florida first attempted to repeal its interior design law, leaders of the interior design association (who get direct financial benefits from the licensure) claimed lawmakers were going to be responsible for more deaths from fires, falls and diseases.

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There is no evidence that states establishing an interior design license see better health and safety results (Florida got rid of its law.) Consumers and businesses can decide for themselves if they want to hire an architect, project manager, licensed interior designer or unlicensed interior designer for their projects.

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