



March 23, 2007

Letters to the Editor  
The Washington Post  
1150 15th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the American Society of Interior Designers, representing more than 38,000 members, we were very disappointed to see that Mr. Will's column ("Wallpapering With Red Tape") presented only one side of the issue and may mislead readers that all persons offering decorating and design services are equally qualified.

Professional interior designers are qualified by education, experience and examination to enhance the function, safety and quality of interior spaces. Every decision an interior designer makes impacts the health, safety and welfare of the public. In what is considered one of the worst hotel fires in modern U.S. history, 87 lives were lost and 785 people were injured in a fire at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas because some interior finish and furnishing selections were not appropriate for commercial use. If furniture is placed in such a manner that it impedes egress during an emergency or exit pathways are not appropriately marked or laid out, people will die. Should a non-qualified, non-educated person select the materials for the interior of a hospital, nursing home, school or high-rise building? Interior designers must comply with building, life safety and accessibility codes in specifying interior finishes and configuring space plans and furniture layouts that are safe, functional and attractive for the public. Registration or licensure of interior designers is in the public's interest, as it ensures that only qualified individuals design interior spaces or hold themselves out as qualified to do so.

As Mr. Will mentions, in such states where the interior design law merely protects the use of a title, such as in New Mexico and 18 other states, anyone can perform interior design services provided they do not refer to themselves by the title designated in that state. While six states and jurisdictions currently have interior design laws that both restrict the use of a title and the ability to practice interior design to those qualified, the American Society of Interior Designers advocates for such state registration and licensure laws for interior designers in all 50 states to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of the public is adequately protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Alin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael C. Alin  
Executive Director  
American Society of Interior Designers

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