



The nation's leading advocacy group protecting designers' livelihoods

The Interior Design Protection Council

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9 Reasons to Join the National Freedom Grassroots Organization

As I travel around the country speaking at town hall meetings on the topic of anti-competitive interior design regulation, I am frequently asked, “why join a national organization when legislation is local?” Here’s why!

1. ***What happens in one state directly impacts every other state.*** Since 2006, IDPC has helped entrepreneurs in dozens of states resist the push to license interior designers. Prior to 2006, 22 states were successful in enacting some sort of government-mandated title or practice laws. But since 2006, over 100 bills which would have expanded or enacted new regulations have been defeated. The momentum shifted towards less – not more – arbitrary government intervention.
2. ***The pro-regulation coalitions are stepping up their game.*** Faced with so much opposition, the pro-regulation faction is becoming more focused and targeted in their approach. They have begun hiring higher-powered lobbyists and are persuading legislators who sit on licensing committees to sponsor their bills. They are inserting carefully worded exemptions in their bills which give the impression of exempting thousands of practitioners, but under close scrutiny do not hold up. This year, for the first time in many years, states like Georgia, Virginia, Alabama, Illinois and Connecticut were successful in passing amendments which expanded their existing title laws, and in Massachusetts and New York “lesser” bills regarding bidding and re-opening the grandfather exemption have been swiftly moving through their legislatures. Once ensconced, seemingly innocuous titling laws prove to be the proponent’s vehicle for incrementally adopting full occupational licensing.
3. ***The momentum will change.*** If more and more bills proposing new laws and/or bills to amend and expand existing laws are allowed to pass, the momentum will shift *back* towards favoring licensing again. Then, for example, a bill that passes in Pennsylvania will be used in California as evidence that this is where the country is going – a so-called “national standard;” bills passing in adjacent states will be used to create regional regulations; a snowball effect is created.
4. ***Our opponents will gain a “majority” favorability.*** With 22 states already affected, we cannot allow more states to fall prey. The Cartel already tells legislators that 26 states are regulated – a false statement used solely to mislead them into believing that a majority of states have adopted regulations. The truth is, they include states that do not have state-mandated, taxpayer-funded, state board controlled laws – Puerto Rico and Washington DC are not states, Colorado has a permitting statute but does not regulate interior designers, and California has a voluntary, self-certification program with no taxpayer funding or board. This has been one of my main rebuttal points at *every* hearing I’ve testified in – state activists are seldom knowledgeable about the number of states regulated or other Cartel misinformation, so without IDPC at legislative hearings, those statements would be allowed to stand without confutation.

Discrediting proponents' statements by supplying factual, statistical and empirical evidence has been one of the determining factors in derailing legislation.

5. ***It impacts other industries.*** Interior design regulation has a negative collateral effect on other industries whose scope of work falls under the restrictions defined in the legislation, including but not limited to kitchen and bath designers, office furniture dealers, foodservice equipment suppliers, flooring companies, remodelers, stagers, lighting designers, workrooms, decorators, showrooms, etc. In Florida, one of three states with a practice law, and undoubtedly the most aggressive and ruthlessly prosecuted, over 600 Floridians working in over 20 industries/professions have been prosecuted and/or disciplined over the last 5 years.
6. ***We need to expand our scope.*** Not only do we need to stop new bills from passing, but we need to work on repealing existing laws, and watch for opportunities to sunset existing government mandated state laws. Stopping new laws from being enacted, squashing amendments to expand existing laws, and repealing/de-funding existing laws – all of this takes a tremendous amount of funding.
7. ***The Freedom Movement will collapse without IDPC.*** It is said that “all politics are local.” We agree, and that’s why we strive to raise the level of awareness and work with state activists. While there are also many national and state organizations that assist us – some more than others, depending on the specific state – the Freedom Movement has been described as a three-legged stool (IDPC, IJ and NKBA) which holds up the other organizations and independent designers. IJ litigates important legal challenges but is rarely involved in the legislative process; NKBA is a loud voice, but can only advocate on behalf of their own members; IDPC (we founded the “Freedom Movement” http://www.idpcinfo.org/Patti_Morrow_and_the_Interior_Design_Freedom_Movement.pdf) is the umbrella for the other organizations and voice for the design community. Everyone agrees that if one of the three major legs should break off, the entire movement and momentum will be jeopardized. IDPC is funded solely through individual memberships and sponsorships from trade associations, state coalitions, and suppliers. No IDPC = No Freedom Movement.
8. ***Control your destiny and the future of interior design.*** There are two clear choices: (1) let ASID control the field of design, or (2) fight back so that designers can continue to direct their own destinies.
9. ***Leadership is mandatory to succeed.*** The bottom line is, in order to succeed, the resistance must be under the supervision and organization of a national organization. ASID is a national organization – the money and muscle behind the push for regulation. They have a patient, long-term agenda, and are very well-funded having already spent in excess of \$7,000,000 lobbying for their own self-anointed test (the NCIDQ) to legally be adopted as the “minimum competency” to practice. The Freedom Movement needs to be coordinated by a national organization with even more patience, motivation and passion to protect the rights and livelihoods of the design community, and preserve their ability to work in the field that they love.

IDPC has the passion and commitment. We need funding to continue. Will you help?

Membership: <http://www.idpcinfo.org/Membership.html> Industry Partner: <http://www.idpcinfo.org/Sponsors.html>

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