

Anti Licensing

Insurgence of the Independents



The proverbial line in the carpet has been drawn, and a polarization of the design community is emerging. Like those oppressed in the past, independent designers who reject one-size-fits-all legislation are rising up to defend their turf.

What is at stake is one of the most basic freedoms afforded to U.S. citizens—the right to earn an honest living. Virtually all legislation proposed contains language that would effectively put the majority of hard-working designers out of business or prevent them from calling themselves “interior designers” unless they possess certain arbitrary credentials. Not coincidentally, these credentials are identical as those needed to become a “professional” member of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), the organization that has spearheaded licensing for the past 30 years.

This is all done under the guise of “protecting the public.” Yet not a shred of evidence has ever been presented to support a conclusion that the unregulated practice of interior design places the public in any form of jeopardy whatsoever.

Why then have millions of dollars been spent lobbying for regulation? It’s really very simple. Choose your word: monopoly, cartel, domination, control. ASID wants it. But designers are not willing to give it. Interior design is a dynamic profession that celebrates innovation, creativity and diversity. Regulation is contrary to those values and antithetical to a free market society.

Answering the outcry from the design community, the Interior Design Protection Council (IDPC) emerged on the battlefield to lead the charge for design

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freedom. IDPC, a nonprofit organization whose sole mission is to protect the livelihoods and rights of designers, began its campaign by launching its secret weapon: the independent designer.

The group’s strategy lies in educating, organizing and training designers on how to effectively resist regulation through grassroots opposition. ... Armed with facts and statistics, IDPC has intensified and impacted the fight.

And the success of this grassroots movement has been nothing short of astounding! This year, despite an unprecedented lobbying campaign, 30 bills to enact or expand licensing laws have been defeated or derailed. Not one single piece of new legislation has

passed.

Until recently, the outcome of this battle was thought to be a forgone conclusion. The “regulation is inevitable!” mantra wove its insidious web into the design community.

But the rhetoric and misleading information are being barraged by truth, facts and statistics that belie the underlying premise for regulation. Independent designers are excited, energized and expanding their army.

The momentum is definitely with the resistance—banner of freedom held high and no combat fatigue in sight.

Surrender is just not an option. ▾

Patti Morrow is the principal of Juxtapose Design in Concord, N.H.; executive director of the Interior Design Protection Council (IDPCinfo.org); author of Getting Grassroots Galvanized; and adjunct faculty member of the interior design program at the New Hampshire Institute of Art. Reach her at pmorrow@IDPCinfo.org.