

DATE

Delegate/Senator Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Delegate/Senator:

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss Governor McDonnell's initiative to decertify Certified Interior Designers (CIDs) in Virginia. I feel that there was a lack of understanding of my profession when the Governor's Commission on Government Reform and Restructuring made the recommendation to decertify CIDs. In reading recent articles and the reasoning behind the deregulation of my industry, it is very clear this is the case.

Decertification, or deregulation, as it is being referred, will have a number of negative impacts here in the Commonwealth. I would like to explain to you what we truly do and how it will negatively impact the health, safety and welfare of Virginia citizens, add costs to the state, and destroy many small businesses and professional advancement opportunities in Virginia, including my own.

In becoming an "interior designer," I invested in my education and training by first attending a four year university and obtaining my degree in an accredited interior design program. I served in a two-year "apprenticeship". "Apprentices" learn hands-on from those who understand the federal and state regulations and building codes required when designing interiors to such facilities as hospitals, nursing homes, senior living communities, child care centers, universities, community colleges and more. Having served my "apprenticeship", I took the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) exam which allowed me to become a *Certified* Interior Designer (CID) in Virginia. I have invested my time and money to distinguish myself, and ultimately my company, by qualifying to provide interior design services for facilities requiring a thorough knowledge of federal and state regulations and building codes.

Some are under the impression that NCIDQ is a regulatory body. NCIDQ administers an exam of competency for interior designers. Additionally, NCIDQ performs and tracks continuing education to keep up on interior design requirements including changing state & federal building codes and Americans with Disability Act requirements.

Four Virginia Public Universities, and two private have CIDA accredited interior design programs. Virginia Tech, James Madison University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Radford University, Marymount University and The Art Institute of Washington in Arlington, VA are accredited interior design programs. Three of the four public universities have been in the top **10** rankings for accredited interior design schools in the *United States*. Because these Virginia interior design programs are in such high demand, they have to turn students away.

One of the statements from the Governor's office is that by deregulating *Certified* Interior Designers, it will remove barriers for all interior designers. This is simply not true. The certification process in Virginia is voluntary and does not prevent interior designers from working within our state. What the

certification does do is allow those of us who seek that higher designation of becoming “*CERTIFIED*” to be competitive in the commercial market with our competitors. Like architects, CIDs are qualified to design interiors and submit these plans for permitting approval on many projects. Designing the interiors of public buildings becomes critical when accounting for health, safety and welfare of the users of these areas. Deregulating CIDs removes our ability to compete in the marketplace. Requiring the certification does not create more competition among interior designers. Those interior designers who do not seek to become certified will not be able to meet the requirements set forth in the state and federal RFPs for interior design in either case.

Let me be very clear – by deregulating this voluntary certification through DPOR, the nearly 500 currently *certified* interior designers who may decide to respond to a federal or state RFP for interior design services in Virginia will no longer be able to compete with architects for this business. We will be dependent upon architects to do our business.

PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF YOUR WORK WITH AN EXPLANATION OF HOW BEING DECERTIFIED WOULD HAVE IMPACTED YOU.

I know that understanding the full scope of my profession is difficult to cover in a short letter, and the dynamics are somewhat complicated. I would like very much to meet with you to discuss in more detail why the idea of deregulating *Certified* Interior Designers would be a mistake in so many ways. Please make time for me in your busy schedule in the next week so that we may discuss the impacts further.

Thank you in advance for taking time to understand how professionals who are Certified Interior Designers truly create healthy and safe spaces for the welfare of the citizens of Virginia.

Respectfully,

Name