

Legislative Corner
By Peggy Suzio, IIDA, VP GRA

I would like to update everyone on national legislative efforts underway on IIDA's behalf. In particular, Caren Martin, Ph. D. has produced a wonderful response to an article titled *Designing Cartels: How Industry Insiders Cut Out Competition*, a report that examines titling laws – in particular interior design titling. While I will not present details of the *Designing Cartels* article I believe Martin's response is a wealth of information and sensibility relevant to our interest in developing and elevating the status of the Interior Design profession.

Martin responds that the article *Designing Cartels*, perhaps inadvertently, draws attention to the “confusion that exists in the public realm about the title “Interior Designer”, observing that the authors don't understand the difference between interior designer and interior decorator. She feels that given this widespread public disconnect it is even more pressing for the interior design profession to demonstrate their value with respect to the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Martin writes “one characteristic of a profession is regulation of its practice”. Regulating a profession requires engaging in a legislative process that is both extensive and complex. It “relies on a broad basis of input from all stake holders and is successful when all parties have negotiated to secure the best outcome for the public”. Martin acknowledges efforts for pursuing legislation encompass gathering sponsors and educating legislators prior to the introduction of the legislation. Therefore it is particularly important for the Interior Design community to work together, and with legislators, to make the case that there is a compelling public reason for regulating their practice. Currently there are 26 other states, including The District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and all eight Canadian Provinces with interior design legislation in place to protect the health, safety and welfare of their citizens. (to learn more about states and provinces with legislation/regulations go to: www.iida.org/custom/legislation/stateleg.cfm)

Beyond addressing consumer protection, legislation may serve to qualify and professionalize other essential elements of interior design practice, as it has for over 8,400* professions regulated in the United States today.

Martin's analysis of the data presented in the *Designing Cartel* article sharpened for her the dimensions against which interior design needs to be measured for success with legislation: education, examination, and experience. For interior design this includes 1) identifying the relationship of interior design with the health, safety, and welfare of the public, 2) provision for a formal education, and 3) monitored experience in the field.

Checking our efforts in Oregon against Martin's sense for interior design legislation across the country I am confident that IIDA in collaboration with IDC-Oregon is focusing on the same issues.

In the next legislative corner I will be writing about Denise Guerin and Caren Martin's publication *The Interior Design Profession's Body of Knowledge*. This work talks about the importance of developing a specific body of knowledge necessary to define and support a profession whose work is considered * “reliable and of high value”. (Read and download the 230 pages at: <http://www.careersininteriordesign.com/idbok.pdf>)

I wish you the best health, safety, and welfare possible over this upcoming joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,

Peg Suzio, IIDA

To read *Martin's publication go to: <https://netfiles.umn.edu/users/cmartin/Martin%20IJ%20Rebuttal>
To read *Designing Cartels* report go to: <http://www.ij.org/publications/other/designing-cartels.html>

REMINDER:

NCIDQ: The Standard of Excellence for Interior Design Professionals

It is more important than ever for clients and the public to expect interior design professionals to demonstrate their competency in all areas of interior design. It is not enough for a provider of interior design services to understand just the aesthetics. The designed safety of interiors for home owners business owners or users of public and private spaces requires much more in today's complex world (www.ncidq.org).

NCIDQ Exam Dates:

December 10, 2007: Application deadline for Spring 2008 exam

April 4-5, 2008: Spring NCIDQ exam

June 10, 2008: Application deadline for Fall 2008 exam

October 3-4, 2008: Fall 2008 exam