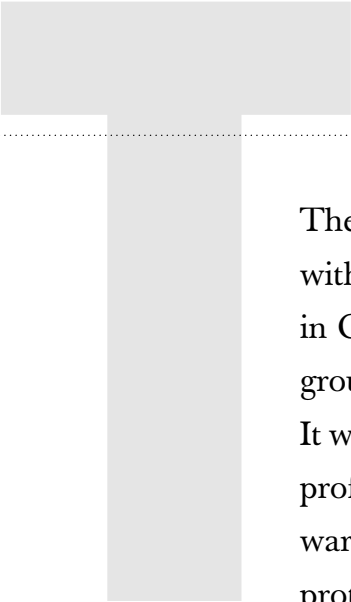


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Legislation

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The history of legislation regulating interior design in America began with the attempt to pass the first interior design regulation legislation in California in 1951. This attempt was not successful in creating new ground-breaking legislation; as a matter of fact, it failed in its attempt. It was successful in bringing to the profession a perceived idea that the profession was changing and becoming more complex. It also forewarned practitioners of the need for legislation that would not only protect the health and safety of the public utilizing interior design services, but would also protect the practice of interior design.

Since that time, the face of interior design has changed dramatically, and through this evolution the responsibilities of design professionals have become more complex. Today interior designers are responsible for a variety of life safety issues that have, in the past, been in the purview of other design professionals, such as architects and engineers. In many states and jurisdictions today, the designer is responsible for planning ingress and egress from interior spaces, many of them in large, complex high-rise projects. In many cases, the interior designer serves as the project programmer, planner, and lead design professional. Because of this evolution of responsibilities, one of the most important factors facing interior design practitioners today is their right to practice the profession for which they are educated, experienced, and examined to practice.

Designers may wonder why they should know the history of legislation in their field. They may believe that professional self-regulation is sufficient to ensure that the design profession fulfills its responsibilities. Like other professions that affect public welfare, there is a strong case for legal regulation of interior design. The professional interior design community, bolstered by advances in education and experience, has taken custodial responsibility for interior design in today's society. It has developed and promoted a scientific core of knowledge, formal education requirements, including a college-level accreditation system, and a professional examination to focus specifically on interior design. With this professionalization comes regulation: not only title