

acts (allowing designers to call themselves interior designers) but also practice acts (establishing standards for professional conduct), and through ethical codes as well.

Conceived in the late 1960s and incorporated in 1974, the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) was established. The council, through its examination, seeks to create a universal standard by which to measure the competency of interior designers to practice as professionals. The birth of this examination came as a result of the growing complexity of the interior design profession, and serves to identify to the public those interior designers who have met the minimum standards for professional practice. The NCIDQ has become the hallmark examination for interior design legislation. In all states with interior design legislation, the NCIDQ is a requirement.

In 1982, Alabama became the first state to enact legislation for the regulation of interior design. This enactment became the catalyst for other states to pursue legislative actions. Interior design professional organizations began to establish state-to-state coalitions for the sole purpose of gaining interior design legislation. Today there are 19 states with interior design regulation: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin, and also the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. While regulation in some of the states is only for title, in others it regulates both title and practice.

In 1989, the National Legislative Coalition of Interior Design (NLCID) was formed. This coalition was established to aid those state coalitions by becoming a clearinghouse for information about local and national legislative activities. In 1989, the AIA/Interior Design Accord was signed. This accord was an agreement entered into by several design organizations, namely, the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), the Institute of Business Designers (IBD), and the International Society of Interior Designers (ISID). The purpose of the accord was to establish guidelines for states seeking interior design legislation. The general intent of this accord was that the AIA would not oppose attempts by interior designers to gain legislation at state levels so long as those attempts were only for title acts; it did not include any regulations which pertained to definition of scope of practice, sealing of construction documentation, or performance of any design that affected health or life safety.

While the accord was looked on by some to be an instrument to aid interior designers in obtaining title act legislation for their states, many people on both sides of the accord perceived the document to be nothing more than a way for the AIA to control how, and if, interior designers would gain legislation. The accord was abandoned by the interior design participants in the spring of 2000. The accord was abandoned primarily because of a lack of participation by both interior designers and architects. What had been written as a living, evolving document had been allowed to wither and was no longer viable.

Today there are 19 states, as well as the territory of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, with varying forms of interior design legislation. There are now active coalitions in all 50 states, of which some are seeking to enact legislation acknowledging interior design as a profession, while others are actively pursuing modifications of existing legislation.

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### PRACTICE ACTS VERSUS TITLE ACTS

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In some states, interior designers may not be able to practice until they meet the requirements of a title act, which establishes the qualifications they must meet before they can practice. Once they qualify to practice, they may be subject to legal requirements that limit the scope and set the standard of professional conduct for their practice. The differences between the two types of legislation deserve some elaboration.

*Practice acts* define a particular scope of practice as well as regulate the actual performance of such practice by any individual registered to perform those services. Persons wishing to engage in the practice must demonstrate their ability to meet certain standards as set forth by practice legislation. These acts usually require levels of education, experience, and examination. Practice acts are usually reserved for those professions dealing with health, safety, and welfare issues, such as architecture, engineering, and medicine. Professions are regulated by the state. This regulation is usually done by a state board made up of a group of peers appointed by the state's governor.

In states where interior design is legislated, government regulators have concluded that interior designers, especially those working in the commercial or contract arena, do, in fact, have a great deal of influence over the health,