


2920 Forestville Road
Ste 100 PMB 1294
Raleigh, NC 27616



The Green Tape Measure

Research. Educate. **Advance.**

(919) 229-9864 

info@thegreentapemeasure.org 

To:

Subcommittee Chairman, The Honorable Thomas R. "Randy" Ligon

April 25, 2026

House of Representatives

P.O. Box 11867

Columbia, SC 29201

RE: OPPOSITION to H. 5010 — Registered Interior Designers

Dear Chairman Ligon and members of the Real Estate Subcommittee,

The Green Tape Measure is a volunteer-run data-driven advocacy organization based in North Carolina. While not a South Carolina resident organization, we are writing to oppose H. 5010 because its regulatory approach sets a dangerous precedent for interior design protection nationwide.

H. 5010 creates registration for interior designers administered by the existing Board of Architectural Examiners—a compromise that trades substantive professional protections for the appearance of progress. Our analysis identifies five critical flaws:

1. VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION IS A WEAK CONSUMER PROTECTION

H. 5010 creates a registered interior designer title but does not prohibit unlicensed individuals from practicing interior design. This is a fatal loophole: unqualified individuals can still specify materials, design spaces, and submit plans—they simply cannot use the registered title. This protects only the title, not public safety. If H. 5010's goal is to protect public health, safety, and welfare, it must prohibit unlicensed interior design practice with narrow exceptions.

2. BOARD COMPOSITION CREATES ARCHITECTURAL BIAS

The Board composition—five architects to three interior designers—creates a 5:3 architectural majority. Architects have a direct financial incentive to restrict interior design scope and practice. This conflict of interest compromises board legitimacy. Interior design is a distinct profession with distinct competencies (demonstrated by separate accreditation standards and distinct examination requirements). A distinct profession deserves equal representation. At minimum, the bill should require equal board representation.

3. SCOPE OF PRACTICE IS VAGUE AND ASYMMETRICALLY RESTRICTIVE

Section 4 defines interior design practice with undefined boundaries. The bill prohibits interior designers from materially affecting life safety systems and prevents changes to fire-rated walls and assemblies and means of egress systems. But interior designers regularly work with egress, fire safety, and life safety codes as core competencies. This overly restrictive scope contradicts the bill's stated purpose of expanding interior design recognition.

Critically, there is NO reciprocal restriction on architects or engineers practicing interior design. Architects and engineers can practice interior design without demonstrating competency in interior design's specific knowledge domains. Our research indicates that accredited architecture programs provide only 8% of the interior design instruction found in a full interior design degree. There are also interior design knowledge domains that are not heavily tested or entirely missing from the ARE, including human behavior and many interiors codes.

4. TITLE PROTECTION IS ASYMMETRIC

The bill restricts the title architect to licensed individuals but restricts only the title registered interior designer (not interior designer). This creates a two-tiered system. An unlicensed individual can still call themselves an interior designer and practice; they simply cannot use the "registered" modifier. This distinction undermines the bill's credibility with consumers and the profession.

5. VAGUE DEFINITION OF NONSTRUCTURAL CONSTRUCTION

The bill references nonstructural construction repeatedly but never defines it. This guarantees future litigation over scope boundaries. Interior designers work with building codes, MEP coordination, and life safety systems. Without clear definition, practitioners cannot operate with confidence, and enforcement becomes arbitrary.

H. 5010 frames itself as advancing interior design, but it subordinates the profession to architectural oversight while creating regulatory ambiguity. Interior design is a distinct profession deserving distinct regulatory authority. We urge the committee to:

- Prohibit unlicensed interior design practice (with narrow residential exceptions) rather than title protection alone
- Establish equal board representation for interior designers, or create an independent Interior Design Board
- Define nonstructural construction and clarify interior designer scope boundaries with examples
- Establish reciprocal scope restrictions: architects and engineers cannot practice interior design without meeting the same requirements as registered interior designers
- Restrict the title interior designer to licensed individuals

Meaningful interior design regulation protects consumers and strengthens the profession. We welcome discussion and thank you for your consideration.

Regards,



Amy Wright
Founder