

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 590  
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/17/17

Short Title: Interior Design Profession Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 6, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK FOR THE VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION  
3 OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE PROFESSION OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND TO ALLOW  
4 REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL INTERIOR DESIGNERS TO OBTAIN PERMITS  
5 FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 SECTION 1. The General Statutes are amended by adding a new Chapter to read:

8 **"Chapter 93F.**  
9 **"Interior Design.**

10 **"§ 93F-1. Title.**

11 This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Interior Design Profession Act."

12 **"§ 93F-2. Purpose.**

13 It is the purpose and intent of this act to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the  
14 public by establishing standards for education and expertise for the practice of interior design  
15 and to ensure a high standard of professional conduct on the part of registered interior  
16 designers.

17 **"§ 93F-3. Definitions.**

18 In this Chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply:

19 (1) Department. – The North Carolina Department of Insurance.

20 (2) Interior alteration or construction. – One or more projects for an interior  
21 space or area within a proposed or existing building or structure that  
22 includes, but is not limited to, the construction, modification, or renovation,  
23 including rehabilitation or historic preservation, of a structure which would  
24 involve changing or altering one or more of the following:

25 a. The design function or layout of rooms, including in a way that  
26 requires assessment rearrangements to be performed.

27 b. The physical state of permanent fixtures or equipment.

28 c. The interior space or area to require verification of compliance with  
29 building codes, fire codes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or  
30 other State or local regulations.

31 d. Interior office systems furniture.

32 e. Nonstructural elements of the interior space or area.

33 (3) Interior decorator. – A person engaged in the performance of one or more of  
34 the following:

35 a. The selection or assistance with the selection, including the provision  
36 of computer-aided drawings, of furniture, fixtures, or equipment that



- 1                    do not affect the safety, health, or welfare of the public as defined by  
2                    any building code or other law, ordinance, rule, or regulation  
3                    governing the interior alteration or construction of a proposed or  
4                    existing building or structure.
- 5                    b. The installation, assistance in installation, staging, or delivery  
6                    services used for interior decoration.
- 7                    (4) Interior designer. – A person engaged in the practice of interior design.  
8                    (5) Interior life safety. – The analysis, development, interpretation, review, and  
9                    employment of space plans or interior components for existing or proposed  
10                   interior spaces to provide for compliance with any building code or other  
11                   law, ordinance, or regulation to eliminate, reduce, or control life-  
12                   health-threatening situations, including egress or ingress to ensure access to  
13                   horizontal fire exit ways leading to predetermined vertical fire exit ways.  
14                   (6) Interior technical submissions. – Designs, drawings, specifications, studies,  
15                   and other technical reports and calculations that are signed and sealed by a  
16                   registered interior designer in compliance with applicable laws and that  
17                   establish the scope of the interior design project, including the standard of  
18                   quality for materials, skilled labor, equipment, and construction systems.  
19                   (7) Licensed design professional. – A person who is licensed as an architect,  
20                   landscape architect, engineer, or land surveyor pursuant to Chapter 83A,  
21                   89A, or 89C of the General Statutes.  
22                   (8) Multidisciplinary interior design firm. – A business entity offering the  
23                   practice of interior design and at least one other service involving a licensed  
24                   design professional.  
25                   (9) NCIDQ. – The National Council for Interior Design Qualification.  
26                   (10) Nonstructural element. – An element which does not require structural  
27                   bracing and which is something other than a load-bearing element of a  
28                   structure which is essential to its structural integrity.  
29                   (11) Practice of interior design. – Includes the following professional activities:  
30                   a. Programming, planning, predesign analysis, and conceptual design,  
31                   including the selection of materials, furniture, fixtures, and  
32                   equipment.  
33                   b. Interior alteration or construction and interior life safety, including  
34                   interior construction documentation and interior technical  
35                   submissions.  
36                   c. The preparation of a physical plan of space within a proposed or  
37                   existing building or structure, including determinations of (i) internal  
38                   circulation systems or patterns, (ii) the location of internal exit  
39                   requirements based on occupancy loads, and (iii) assessment and  
40                   analysis of interior life safety factors for compliance with State and  
41                   local government building codes.  
42                   d. Reviewing, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting building codes,  
43                   fire codes, accessibility standards, including the Americans with  
44                   Disabilities Act, or other federal, State, or local regulations, codes,  
45                   and standards.  
46                   e. The rendering of designs, plans, drawings, specifications, contract  
47                   documents, or other technical submissions and the administration of  
48                   interior construction and contracts relating to nonstructural elements  
49                   in interior alteration or construction of a proposed or existing  
50                   building or structure.

1           (12) Registered interior designer. – A person who holds a certificate of  
2           registration pursuant to this Chapter as an interior designer.

3 **"§ 93F-4. Application for registration.**

4           (a) An applicant for registration shall be registered upon satisfactory proof to the  
5 Department that the applicant is of good moral character and meets the following requirements:

6           (1) Submission of a signed application in a form to be established by the  
7 Department.

8           (2) Passage of the examination administered by the NCIDQ.

9           (3) Submission of a statement of personal qualification that includes at least all  
10 of the following information about the applicant:

11           a. Full legal name and name submitted for registration.

12           b. Date of birth.

13           c. Personal and business mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and  
14 e-mail addresses.

15           d. State and county of residence.

16           e. Employer's name, address, and telephone number, if the applicant is  
17 employed at the time of application.

18           f. All issuances, denials, revocations, suspensions, or restrictions of a  
19 license, certificate, or registration pertaining to the practice of  
20 interior design in this State or any other jurisdiction.

21           (4) Payment of the application fee established by the Department pursuant to  
22 this Chapter, but not exceeding seventy-five dollars (\$75.00).

23           (b) The Department may require new applicants who passed the NCIDQ examination  
24 more than 24 months prior to submission of a registration application pursuant to this section to  
25 submit proof of completion of continuing education coursework in an amount and format  
26 consistent with the continuing education requirements established pursuant to this Chapter.

27 **"§ 93F-5. Expiration and renewals; continuing education.**

28           (a) Registrations shall expire two years following issuance or renewal and shall become  
29 invalid after that date unless renewed. A registrant may apply for renewal of a registration no  
30 earlier than 10 weeks prior to the expiration date of the current registration.

31           (b) The Department shall issue a renewal of registration to an applicant upon proof  
32 satisfactory to the Department that the applicant is of good moral character and meets all of the  
33 following requirements:

34           (1) Submission of a signed application for renewal in a form to be established  
35 by the Department.

36           (2) Submission of proof of completion of at least 24 continuing education units  
37 by providing the following information:

38           a. The name and address of the continuing education provider.

39           b. The dates attended and hours of credit claimed.

40           c. The physical location, title, and subject-matter description of the  
41 continuing education unit and the names of the instructors.

42           d. Documentation of successful completion of the continuing education  
43 units from the providers.

44           e. Documentation that at least 12 continuing education units focused on  
45 one or more of the following subject matters:

46           1. Any single area of practice for an interior designer as defined  
47 in this Chapter.

48           2. Any topic that advances consumer protection in the built  
49 environment.

50           3. Health and wellness of building occupants.

4. Public safety, including application of State and local fire codes, building codes, and regulations.
5. Resiliency.
6. Sustainability.
7. Application of federal, State, and local laws pertaining to accessibility standards, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

(3) Payment of the renewal fee established by the Department pursuant to this Chapter, but not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00).

(c) The Department may, at its discretion, grant an extension of an expired registration for a period not exceeding one year for applicants seeking renewal of registration who have failed to submit a completed application or satisfy the continuing education requirements because of circumstances of emergency or hardship. An extension granted pursuant to this subsection shall not relieve the applicant from compliance with the continuing education requirements or any other obligation imposed by this Chapter.

**"§ 93F-6. Reciprocity.**

The Department shall issue a registration to an applicant who, at the time of application, holds a valid license, certificate, or registration as an interior designer issued by another state or a political territory or jurisdiction acceptable to the Department if, in the Department's determination, the requirements for that license, certificate, or registration are substantially equal to or greater than the requirements for registration pursuant to this Chapter. In addition to the application requirements provided in G.S. 93F-4, applicants seeking reciprocal registration shall pay to the Department an additional fee, but not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00).

**"§ 93F-7. Disqualifications for registration.**

(a) The Department may either refuse to issue or to renew, or may suspend or revoke a registration for any one or combination of the following reasons:

- (1) Fraud or material misrepresentation in procuring the registration.
- (2) Habitual intoxication or addiction to the use of drugs.
- (3) Use of the title "registered interior designer" under a name other than his or her own.
- (4) Knowingly allowing another to wrongfully use the title "registered interior designer," or professional connection or association with any person or business entity holding itself out in any manner contrary to the provisions of this Chapter or its rules.
- (5) Signing or affixing the registered interior designer's seal or knowingly permitting the registered interior designer's seal to be affixed to any technical submissions not prepared by the registered interior designer or under that registered interior designer's direct supervision and control.
- (6) Improper, unprofessional, or dishonorable conduct of a character likely to deceive, defraud, or harm the public.
- (7) Conviction of the applicant or registrant of any crime that is a felony, if the Department determines, after investigation, that such person has not been sufficiently rehabilitated to warrant the public trust.
- (8) Revocation by another state or a political territory or jurisdiction of an interior design license, certification, or registration if at least one of the grounds for that revocation is the same as or the equivalent of one of the grounds for revocation set forth in this Chapter or by the Department.
- (9) Mental incompetence as declared by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (10) A violation of any provision of this Chapter or its rules, or aiding or assisting another person in violating any provision of this Chapter or its rules.

1           (11) Failure to provide information in response to a written request made by the  
2           Department within 30 days after receipt of the written request.

3           (b) At any time after suspension, revocation, or the taking of any other disciplinary  
4 action with regard to any registration, the Department may reinstate the registration, or take any  
5 other action to reinstate the registration to good standing.

6 **"§ 93F-8. Misdemeanors.**

7           Each of the following acts constitutes a Class 2 misdemeanor:

8           (1) The affixing of a registered interior designer's signature or seal to any  
9 interior technical submissions without the permission of the registrant.

10          (2) Using or attempting to use an expired, inactive, suspended, or revoked  
11 registration or seal or the registration or seal of another, or impersonating  
12 another registrant.

13          (3) Obtaining or attempting to obtain a registration by fraud.

14          (4) The making of any willfully false oath or affirmation in any matter or  
15 proceeding where an oath or affirmation is required by this Chapter.

16 **"§ 93F-9. Civil penalties; disciplinary costs.**

17          (a) The Department may assess a civil penalty not in excess of one thousand dollars  
18 (\$1,000) per offense for the violation by a registrant of any of the reasons provided in  
19 G.S. 93F-7. The clear proceeds of any civil penalty assessed under this section shall be remitted  
20 to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

21          (b) Before imposing and assessing a civil penalty, the Department shall consider the  
22 following factors:

23           (1) The nature, gravity, and persistence of the particular violation.

24           (2) The appropriateness of the imposition of a civil penalty when considered  
25 alone or in combination with other punishment.

26           (3) Whether the violation was willful and malicious.

27           (4) Any other factors that would tend to mitigate or aggravate the violations  
28 found to exist.

29          (c) The Department shall establish a schedule of civil penalties for violations of this  
30 Chapter and rules adopted by the Department.

31          (d) The Department may, in a disciplinary proceeding, charge costs, including  
32 reasonable attorneys' fees, to the registered interior designer against whom the proceedings  
33 were brought.

34 **"§ 93F-10. Enjoining illegal practices.**

35           The Department may apply to the superior court for an injunction to restrain any person  
36 from violating the provisions of this Chapter or its rules. Actions under this section shall be  
37 brought in the county where the defendant resides or maintains his or her principal place of  
38 business or where the alleged acts occurred.

39 **"§ 93F-11. Authority and duties of registrants.**

40          (a) A registered interior designer shall possess the authority to sign and seal interior  
41 technical submissions covering the scope of the practice of interior design and shall have the  
42 authority to submit them to a State or local government entity for the purpose of obtaining  
43 requisite permits for an interior alteration or construction project. Only a registered interior  
44 designer, or those under the registrant's supervision and control, may sign and seal interior  
45 technical submissions within the scope of the practice of interior design defined by this  
46 Chapter.

47          (b) A registered interior designer shall have a reproducible seal or facsimile, the print of  
48 which shall contain the full name and registration number of the registered interior designer on  
49 file with the Department, the registrant's business city and state, and the words "Registered  
50 Interior Designer, North Carolina." The seal shall be created and granted to each registered  
51 interior designer by the Department.

1       (c) The registered interior designer shall affix the signature, current date, date of  
2 registration expiration, and seal to the first sheet of any bound set or loose sheets of interior  
3 technical submissions utilized as contract documents between the parties to the contract or  
4 prepared for the review and approval of any State or local government entity having  
5 jurisdiction, by that registered interior designer or under that registered interior designer's  
6 supervision and control.

7       (d) The registered interior designer exercising supervision and control under which the  
8 documents or portions of the documents were prepared shall be identified on the documents or  
9 portions of the documents by name and registration number.

10       (e) The sheet of interior technical submissions in which the seal is affixed shall indicate  
11 those documents or parts thereof for which the seal shall apply. The seal and dates may be  
12 electronically affixed. The registrant may provide, at the registrant's sole discretion, an original  
13 signature in the registrant's handwriting, a scanned copy of the document bearing an original  
14 signature, or a signature generated by a computer. All interior technical submissions issued by  
15 any business entity of this State shall also contain the corporate or assumed business name in  
16 addition to any other seal requirements as set forth in this section. The signature, current date,  
17 date of registration expiration, and seal shall be evidence of the authenticity of any document or  
18 interior technical submissions.

19       (f) No registered interior designer shall affix, or permit to be affixed, his or her  
20 registration number, seal, or signature to any study, plan, specification, drawing, report, or  
21 other document which depicts work which the registrant is not competent to perform.

22       (g) A registered interior designer under the laws of this State shall not sign and seal  
23 interior technical submissions that were not prepared by or under his or her supervision and  
24 control with the exception of any of the following circumstances:

25           (1) The registered interior designer may sign and seal those portions of the  
26 interior technical submissions that were prepared by or under the supervision  
27 and control of other individuals who are also registered interior designers,  
28 provided that the registered interior designer has reviewed in whole or in  
29 part such portions and has either coordinated their preparation or integrated  
30 them into the registrant's work.

31           (2) A partner or corporate officer of a business entity registered in this State,  
32 who is either a registered interior designer or another licensed design  
33 professional under the laws of this State, and who has professional  
34 knowledge of the content of the interior technical submissions and intends to  
35 be responsible for the adequacy of the interior technical submissions, may  
36 sign and seal interior technical submissions that are prepared by or under the  
37 supervision and control of a registered interior designer of this State and who  
38 is in the regular employment of the business entity.

39       (h) Interior technical submissions may be combined with submissions separately  
40 prepared under the supervision and control, seal, and signature of other licensed design  
41 professionals, but it shall not be mandated pursuant to subsection (j) of this section.

42       (i) All interior technical submissions intended for use in an interior alteration or  
43 construction in this State shall be prepared and administered in accordance with standards of  
44 reasonable professional skill and diligence. Care shall be taken to reflect the requirements of  
45 State law and, where applicable, federal law and local government building ordinances  
46 pertaining to the required contents of such submissions.

47       (j) A registered interior designer may choose to submit interior technical submissions,  
48 as may be required to obtain a building permit, separately or as part of a larger submission of  
49 documents compiled by one or more other registered interior designers or other licensed design  
50 professionals.

1       (k) A registered interior designer shall have supervisory authority to assemble, compile,  
2 and submit all documents required to obtain a building permit for interior alteration or  
3 construction, including those prepared, signed, and sealed by one or more other registered  
4 interior designers or licensed design professionals.

5 **"§ 93F-12. Departmental powers and duties.**

6       The Department has the following powers and duties pursuant to this Chapter:

- 7           (1) To issue certificates of registration to individuals meeting the qualifications  
8 to be a registered interior designer.  
9           (2) To adopt rules required for the administration of this act.  
10          (3) To prescribe, by rule, individually identifiable seals to be used by registered  
11 interior designers.  
12          (4) To take disciplinary action as it deems proper, including, but not limited to,  
13 the assessment of civil penalties pursuant to G.S. 93F-9.

14 **"§ 93F-13. Applicability of Chapter.**

15       Nothing in this Chapter shall preclude an unregistered interior designer from the practice of  
16 interior design. The following persons are exempt from the provisions of this Chapter while  
17 engaged in the proper scope of their professions:

- 18           (1) Interior decorators.  
19           (2) Licensed design professionals.  
20           (3) Attorneys at law, licensed pursuant to Chapter 84 of the General Statutes.  
21           (4) General contractors, licensed pursuant to Article 1 of Chapter 87 of the  
22 General Statutes.  
23           (5) Unregistered interior designers."

24       **SECTION 2.** G.S. 83A-9 reads as rewritten:

25 **"§ 83A-9. Partnership practice.**

26       This Chapter neither prevents practice of architecture by a partnership nor requires  
27 partnership seals or certificates of practice provided that at least one of the members of the  
28 partnership ~~are~~ is duly licensed to practice architecture, and, provided that the partnership files  
29 with the Board and keeps current a list of the partners, their license or registration  
30 identifications, and the types of services offered by the partnership."

31       **SECTION 3.** G.S. 153A-357 reads as rewritten:

32 **"§ 153A-357. Permits.**

33       ...

34       (a1) A permit shall be in writing and shall contain a provision that the work done shall  
35 comply with the State Building Code and all other applicable State and local laws and local  
36 ordinances and regulations. Nothing in this section shall require a county to review and approve  
37 residential building plans submitted to the county pursuant to Section R-110 of Volume VII of  
38 the North Carolina State Building Code; provided that the county may review and approve such  
39 residential building plans as it deems necessary. No permit may be issued unless the plans and  
40 specifications are identified by the name and address of the author thereof; and if the General  
41 Statutes of North Carolina require that plans for certain types of work be prepared only by a  
42 licensed ~~architect or architect~~, licensed engineer, or registered interior designer, no permit may  
43 be issued unless the plans and specifications bear the North Carolina seal of a licensed ~~architect~~  
44 ~~or of a architect~~, licensed ~~engineer-engineer~~, or registered interior designer. If a provision of the  
45 General Statutes of North Carolina or of any ordinance requires that work be done by a licensed  
46 specialty contractor of any kind, no permit for the work may be issued unless the work is to be  
47 performed by such a duly licensed contractor.

48       ...

49       (f) No county may withhold issuing a building permit or certificate of occupancy that  
50 otherwise would be eligible to be issued under this section to compel, with respect to another  
51 property or parcel, completion of work for a separate permit or compliance with land use

1 regulations under this Article unless otherwise authorized by law or unless the county  
2 reasonably determines the existence of a public safety issue directly related to the issuance of a  
3 building permit or certificate of occupancy.

4 (g) Violation of this section constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor."

5 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 160A-417 reads as rewritten:

6 "**§ 160A-417. Permits.**

7 ...

8 (a1) A permit shall be in writing and shall contain a provision that the work done shall  
9 comply with the State Building Code and all other applicable State and local laws. Nothing in  
10 this section shall require a city to review and approve residential building plans submitted to  
11 the city pursuant to Section R-110 of Volume VII of the North Carolina State Building Code;  
12 provided that the city may review and approve such residential building plans as it deems  
13 necessary. No permits shall be issued unless the plans and specifications are identified by the  
14 name and address of the author thereof, and if the General Statutes of North Carolina require  
15 that plans for certain types of work be prepared only by a licensed ~~architect or architect,~~  
16 licensed engineer, or registered interior designer, no permit shall be issued unless the plans and  
17 specifications bear the North Carolina seal of a licensed ~~architect or of a architect,~~ licensed  
18 ~~engineer-engineer,~~ or registered interior designer. When any provision of the General Statutes  
19 of North Carolina or of any ordinance requires that work be done by a licensed specialty  
20 contractor of any kind, no permit for the work shall be issued unless the work is to be  
21 performed by such a duly licensed contractor.

22 ...

23 (e) No city may withhold issuing a building permit or certificate of occupancy that  
24 otherwise would be eligible to be issued under this section to compel, with respect to another  
25 property or parcel, completion of work for a separate permit or compliance with land use  
26 regulations under this Article unless otherwise authorized by law or unless the city reasonably  
27 determines the existence of a public safety issue directly related to the issuance of a building  
28 permit or certificate of occupancy.

29 (f) Violation of this section constitutes a Class 1 misdemeanor."

30 **SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2017.