

HOUSE No. 4354

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, August 7, 2025.

The committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 324) of Christine P. Barber and Mary S. Keefe relative to registered interior designers, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4354) ought to pass.

For the committee,

TACKEY CHAN.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act relative to advancing the profession of commercial interior design.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 44 of chapter 7C of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the definition of “Designer”, and inserting in
3 place thereof the following definition:-

4 “Designer”, an individual, corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, joint stock
5 company, joint venture, or other entity engaged in the practice of architecture, landscape
6 architecture, registered commercial interior design or engineering, which satisfies the following:

7 (i) if an individual, the individual is a registered architect, landscape architect,
8 commercial interior designer or engineer;

9 (ii) if a partnership, a majority of all the partners are persons who are registered
10 architects, landscape architects, commercial interior designers or engineers;

11 (iii) if a corporation, sole proprietorship, joint stock company or other entity, the majority
12 of the directors or a majority of the stock ownership and the chief executive officer are persons

13 who are registered architects, landscape architects, commercial interior designers or engineers,
14 and the person to have the project in his or her charge is registered in the discipline required for
15 the project; or

16 (iv) if a joint venture, each joint venturer satisfies the requirements of this section.

17 SECTION 2. Said section 44 of said chapter 7C of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
18 hereby further amended by striking out the definition, “Interior Designer”, and inserting after the
19 definition of “Board”, the following definition:-

20 “Commercial Interior Designer”, an individual, corporation, partnership, sole
21 proprietorship, joint stock company, joint venture or other entity engaged in the practice of
22 commercial interior design, who may serve as the prime consultant for projects that primarily
23 involve construction or other work relating to the nonstructural interior elements of a building or
24 structure and who provides services that do not require a registered architect, landscape architect
25 or engineer provided, however, that a commercial interior designer shall demonstrate
26 competence by completion of a nationally-recognized certification.

27 SECTION 3. Said section 44 of said chapter 7C of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
28 hereby further amended by inserting the word “commercial” before the phrase “interior
29 designer” every time it appears.

30 SECTION 4. Section 45 of said chapter 7C of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
31 hereby amended by striking out subsection (a) and inserting in place thereof the following
32 subsection:-

33 (a) There shall be, within the executive office for administration and finance, a designer
34 selection board, consisting of: 10 members appointed by the governor, 3 of whom shall be
35 registered architects in the commonwealth, architects who are unregistered in the commonwealth
36 but have not less than 10 years' experience as an architect registered by a National Council of
37 Architectural Registration Boards member board or architect emeritus, 1 of whom shall be a
38 certified interior designer with not less than 10 years of experience as a National Council for
39 Interior Design Qualifications certified Massachusetts interior designer, 3 of whom shall be
40 registered engineers, or currently unregistered but with not less than 10 years' experience as a
41 registered engineer, and 1 of whom shall be a representative of the public who is not architect,
42 engineer or construction contractor. Three additional members shall be designated as follows: 1
43 registered architect selected by the American Institute of Architects Massachusetts; 1 registered
44 engineer selected by the government affairs council of design professionals; and 1 general
45 contractor selected by the Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts, Inc. No member
46 shall have a record of disciplinary action. Members shall be appointed for terms of 2 years and
47 may be reappointed for not more than 1 successive 2-year term. The director shall designate a
48 representative, who shall be the project manager in the case of a project under the jurisdiction of
49 the office of project management, to act as a nonvoting member of the board for each project
50 under their jurisdiction under consideration by the board.

51 SECTION 5. Chapter 13 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
52 adding the following section:-

53 Section 110. (a) There shall within the division of occupational licensure be a board of
54 registration of commercial interior designers, consisting of 5 members appointed by the
55 governor, 4 of whom shall have been engaged in the practice of interior design for a period of

56 not less than 10 years prior to their appointment and shall be registered commercial interior
57 designers and 1 of whom shall be a member of the general public, subject to the provisions of
58 section 9B. Members of the board shall be residents of the commonwealth.

59 (b) Each member of the board shall serve for a term of 3 years and until the governor
60 appoints a successor. No member shall be appointed to more than 2 consecutive full terms;
61 provided, however, that a member appointed for less than a full term may serve 2 full terms in
62 addition to such part of a full term.

63 (c) A member may be removed by the governor for neglect of duty, misconduct or
64 malfeasance or misfeasance in office after written notice of the charges against them and an
65 opportunity to be heard. Upon the death, resignation or removal for cause of any member of the
66 board, the governor shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of that member's term.

67 (d) The members of the board shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed
68 for actual and necessary expenses reasonably incurred in the performances of their duties as
69 members or on behalf of the board.

70 (e) The board shall hold not less than 2 regular meetings annually and may hold special
71 meetings as required. Time, place and notice of all meetings shall be as required by rules or by-
72 laws determined by the board. The board shall organize and choose from its own members, a
73 chair, a vice chair and a secretary at the first regular annual meeting. A quorum shall consist of 3
74 members.

75 (f) The board may make such rules or by-laws, not inconsistent with law, as it may deem
76 necessary in the performance of its duties, including rules and regulations governing academic
77 and practical experience. The board shall have a seal and its members may administer oaths in

78 the performance of its duties. The board shall have power to summon witnesses, take testimony
79 and require proofs concerning all matters within its jurisdiction. The board shall annually file
80 with the commissioner of occupational licensure a report of its proceedings, which shall include
81 an itemized statement of all receipts and expenses of the board for the year.

82 SECTION 6. Chapter 112 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
83 adding the following 12 sections:-

84 Section 290. As used in sections 291 to 301, inclusive, the following words shall have the
85 following meanings unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

86 “Board”, the board of registration of commercial interior designers established in section
87 110 of chapter 13.

88 "Building", an enclosed structure that has human occupancy or habitation as its principal
89 purpose as defined in the state building code.

90 “Certificate of registration”, the 2-year license to practice commercial interior design
91 issued by the board.

92 “Commercial interior design”, the design and planning of interior spaces in buildings
93 subject to the 780 CMR state building code.

94 "International Building Code", the edition of the International Building Code, issued by
95 the International Code Council, as most recently adopted by the commonwealth, including
96 Massachusetts amendments.

97 “Nonstructural interior construction”, non-seismic or non-structural construction
98 elements within a building or structure which does not require structural bracing, does not affect

99 the structural integrity of the building, is primarily concerned with the interior aspects of design,
100 and does not include any load-bearing components.

101 “Practice of registered commercial interior design”, in relation to performing or agreeing
102 to perform or holding one’s self out as able to perform professional services in connection with
103 obtaining a building permit independent of an architect licensed under sections 60A to 60Q,
104 inclusive, for the design and construction of nonstructural interior construction, including
105 consultations, investigations, evaluations, preliminary studies, aesthetic design and preparation
106 of plans, specifications and contract documents, in accordance with all codes and regulations, co-
107 ordination of building systems, administration of construction contracts and any other similar
108 service or combination of services in connection with the design and construction of
109 nonstructural interior construction, regardless of whether one or all of these services are being
110 performed and regardless of whether these services are performed in person or as the directly
111 head of an office or organization performing them; provided the practice of commercial interior
112 design or registered commercial interior design shall not include the practice of architecture or
113 engineering as defined in chapter 112. The practice of registered commercial interior design does
114 not include services that alter the building’s occupancy classification and use designation,
115 structure, or primary fire, life safety, mechanical, electrical, plumbing or exits as defined by the
116 780 CMR state building code, or other related primary building systems except as explicitly
117 permitted by applicable law.

118 “Registered commercial interior designer”, any person who has been licensed to engage
119 in the practice of commercial interior design as herein defined.

120 “Registered Commercial Interior Designer Emeritus”, an honorary title issued to a
121 licensed commercial interior designer who has retired from the active practice of commercial
122 interior design in the commonwealth.

123 Section 291. Upon approval by the board, an individual who has passed the interior
124 design examination administered by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification
125 (NCIDQ) may use the title Registered Commercial Interior Designer. Such individual shall, upon
126 satisfactory completion of the aforementioned requirements and any other requirements and
127 qualifications as deemed necessary by the board, send to the board a copy of documentation of
128 the proof of: (i) passage of the NCIDQ exam; (ii) satisfactory evidence of graduation from a
129 program accredited by the Council of Interior Design Accreditation and of such practical
130 experience in commercial interior design work as the board may by regulation prescribe. In lieu
131 of evidence of graduation from a Council of Interior Design Accreditation program, the applicant
132 may submit satisfactory evidence of such other academic experience, practical experience, or
133 both, as the board may by regulation prescribe; (iii) any certifications awarded to the individual
134 by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification; (iv) and any other documentation as
135 required by the board. Such documentation shall include, but not be limited to, the individual’s
136 name, mailing address and email address; provided, however, that such individual shall update
137 the board of any changes to such information as they occur. Such documentation shall be placed
138 on file with the division of occupational licensure.

139 Section 292. (a) Each applicant seeking to become a registered commercial interior
140 designer shall pay to the board, upon filing their original application, a fee to be determined
141 annually per the provisions of section 3B of chapter 7. After verification of the documentation
142 required pursuant to section 291 and receipt of the application fee, the board shall issue a

143 certificate of registration for a period of 2 years. The commissioner of occupational licensure or
144 their designee, as the custodian of any documentation required by section 291, shall enforce this
145 section and may use said documentation, or any lack thereof, as deemed necessary,
146 notwithstanding any general or special law or rule or regulation to the contrary.

147 A registered commercial interior designer shall be required to complete continuing
148 education courses. Continuing education shall be gained through coursework delivered in
149 education credits. The quantity and content designation of education credits shall be determined
150 by the board.

151 It shall be unlawful for any individual who is not approved by the board to use the title
152 Registered Commercial Interior Designer or any title or device indicating that an individual is a
153 registered commercial interior designer unless they are registered under the provisions of
154 sections 290 through 301, inclusive.

155 Nothing in sections 290 through 301, inclusive, shall prohibit a person from performing
156 commercial interior design services or using the title commercial interior designer, commercial
157 interiors consultant, commercial interior decorator or a similar title; provided, however, that the
158 word “registered” shall not be used in conjunction with such a title.

159 A registered commercial interior designer shall not practice architecture as defined in
160 section 60A of chapter 112, engineering as defined in section 81D of chapter 112, or any other
161 profession regulated under the laws of the commonwealth, unless specifically authorized to do so
162 under sections 290 through 301, inclusive, or to prepare, sign or seal plans with respect to such
163 practice or in connection with any governmental permits unless licensed or otherwise permitted
164 to do so under such laws.

165 Nothing in sections 290 through 301, inclusive, shall prohibit an architect as defined in
166 section 60A of chapter 112 from offering or performing services of a registered commercial
167 interior designer.

168 Nothing in sections 290 through 301, inclusive, shall prohibit any person from
169 performing professional services limited to the planning, design and implementation of kitchen
170 and bath spaces or the specification of products for kitchen and bath spaces.

171 Nothing in sections 290 through 301, inclusive, shall prohibit an employee of a retail
172 establishment from providing consultation regarding interior design, decoration, furnishings,
173 furniture or fixtures offered for sale by such establishment from receiving compensation from
174 such establishment.

175 (b) Any individual violating sections 290 to 301, inclusive, may be punished by a fine of
176 not more than \$500 or by imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than 3
177 months, or both, or by revocation of registration by the board.

178 Section 293. Every two years, on or about May 1, the board shall mail to every licensed
179 commercial interior designer or licensed commercial interior designer emeritus registered in the
180 commonwealth a blank application for renewal of certificate of registration. Such blanks
181 properly filled out shall be returned to the board on or before the following first day of August.
182 Each such blank shall be accompanied by a renewal fee to be determined annually per the
183 provisions of section 3B of chapter 7. After verification of the facts stated on the renewal
184 blanks, the board shall issue a certificate of annual registration, dated September 1, and which
185 shall expire on August 31 of the two-year period following. Any holder of a certificate of
186 registration who fails to renew their application within 60 days the notification by the board that

187 their license has expired, shall, before again engaging in the practice of registered commercial
188 interior design within the commonwealth, be required to register anew, pay a fee as determined
189 under the aforementioned provision and may be required by the board to be re-examined.

190 Section 294. Each registered commercial interior designer shall have a seal of a design
191 authorized by the board. All plans, specifications and reports prepared by a registered
192 commercial interior designer or under their supervision shall be stamped with the impression of
193 such seal. A registered commercial interior designer shall impress their seal on any plans,
194 specifications or reports if their certificate of registration is in full force and if they were the
195 author of such plans, specifications or reports or were responsible for their preparation.

196 Section 295. The board may revoke, suspend or annual the provisional registration or
197 certificate of registration, or reprimand, censure or otherwise discipline a registrant, upon proof
198 satisfactory to the board that:

199 (a) the holder of such provisional registration or certificate of registration is practicing in
200 the commonwealth in violation of any provision of sections 290 through 301, inclusive, or any
201 rule or regulation promulgated under authority thereof by the board;

202 (b) such provisional registration or certificate of registration was obtained by fraud or
203 misrepresentation;

204 (c) any money or thing of value, except fees prescribed or authorized by said sections,
205 was paid or received to secure the issuance of such provisional registration or certificate of
206 registration;

207 (d) the holder of such provisional registration or certificate of registration has been guilty
208 of fraud or deceit, or of gross negligence, incompetence or misconduct, in the practice of
209 registered commercial interior design;

210 (e) the holder of such a provisional registration or certificate of registration has permitted
211 or suffered their original seal to be affixed to any plans, specifications or drawings not prepared
212 by them or under their personal supervision by their regularly employed subordinates;

213 (f) the holder of a provisional registration or certificate of registration has affixed their
214 signature to plans, drawings, specifications or other instruments of service which have not been
215 prepared by them or in their office, or under their immediate and responsible direction, or has
216 permitted their name to be used for the purpose of assisting any person to evade the provisions of
217 this chapter; or

218 (g) the holder of such provisional registration or certificate of registration has an interest
219 in the manufacture, sale or installation of any component or process in a project for which they
220 are the registered commercial interior designer, which interest they have not disclosed to their
221 client in such manner as the board shall by regulation prescribe.

222 Section 296. Charges against a registered commercial interior designer involving any
223 matter coming within the jurisdiction of the board shall be in writing and shall be filed with the
224 board. Such charges, at the discretion of the board, shall be heard within 30 days after being so
225 filed. The accused registered commercial interior designer shall have the right at such hearing to
226 appear personally, with or without counsel, to cross-examine witnesses against them and to
227 produce evidence and witnesses in their defense. The board shall set the time and place for such
228 hearing and shall cause a copy of the charges, together with a notice of the time and place fixed

229 for the hearing, to be sent by registered mail to the accused registered commercial interior
230 designer, at their latest place of residence or business known to the board, at least 10 days before
231 such date. If after such hearing the board finds the accused registered commercial interior
232 designer guilty of the charges, or any of them, it shall issue an order revoking, suspending or
233 annulling the provisional registration or certificate of registration of the accused registered
234 commercial interior designer, or reprimanding, censuring or otherwise disciplining them. If the
235 board finds them not guilty it shall enter an order dismissing the charges. If such order be that a
236 provisional registration or certificate of registration be revoked, suspended or annulled, the board
237 shall in writing so notify the state secretary and the clerk of the city or town in the
238 commonwealth wherein such registered commercial interior designer has their principal place of
239 business.

240 The board may re-issue a provisional registration or certificate of registration to any
241 person whose provisional registration or certificate of registration has been revoked. Application
242 for the re-issuance of a provisional registration or certificate of registration shall be made in such
243 manner as the board may direct, and shall be accompanied by a fee to be determined annually per
244 the provision of section 3B of chapter 7.

245 Section 297. Every provisional registration or certificate of registration issued and
246 remaining in force, under any provision of sections 290 through 301, inclusive, shall be prima
247 facie evidence in all courts of the commonwealth that the person named therein is legally
248 registered as a registered commercial interior designer for the period for which it is issued, and
249 of all other facts therein stated.

250 Section 298. The determination of any person, or of any officer, board or commission of
251 the commonwealth or of any political subdivision thereof, who makes a contract to have services
252 performed for them or it, that the principal services to be performed thereunder involve the
253 practice of registered commercial interior design, shall be final, unless said determination was
254 made in bad faith, or was fraudulent, capricious or arbitrary.

255 Section 299. Annually, not later than January 31, the board shall prepare a roster showing
256 the names and the last known places of business of all registered commercial interior designers
257 in the commonwealth. Such roster shall be posted on a publicly available website.

258 Section 300. (a) Upon receipt of a written application, the board may grant a certificate of
259 registration as a commercial interior designer emeritus to an interior designer who has retired
260 from the active practice of commercial interior design in the commonwealth. To be eligible for a
261 certificate of registration as a commercial interior designer emeritus, the applicant shall: (i)
262 submit an application together with a fee prescribed by the board; (ii) have been a commercial
263 interior designer in good standing in the commonwealth at the time of their retirement; (iii) be
264 not less than 65 years of age; (iv) have been a registered a commercial interior designer in the
265 commonwealth for not less than 10 years; (v) have relinquished their license to practice
266 commercial interior design; and (vi) satisfy any other requirements as may be prescribed by the
267 board.

268 (b) A registered commercial interior designer emeritus shall neither engage in nor hold
269 themselves out as engaging in the practice of commercial interior design. A commercial interior
270 designer emeritus shall be exempt from the continuing education requirements established in
271 section 292.

272 (c) A registered commercial interior designer emeritus seeking reinstatement as a
273 commercial interior designer shall: (i) file an application for reinstatement with the board; (ii)
274 pay an administrative fee that shall be determined by the board; and (iii) comply with education
275 or other requirements established by the board.

276 Section 301. The board shall be charged with the enforcement of sections 290 to 301,
277 inclusive. If any person refuses to obey any decision of the board, the attorney general shall,
278 upon request of the board, file a petition for the enforcement of such decision in equity in Suffolk
279 county superior court or in the county in which the defendant resides or has a place of business.
280 After due hearing, the court shall order the enforcement of such decision or any part thereof, if
281 legally and properly made by the board.

282 SECTION 7. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, an individual
283 who has completed not less than 10 years of full-time, diversified, verifiable professional
284 experience in the profession of interior design shall be eligible for provisional registration;
285 provided, however, that the individual shall apply for registration not more than 12 months after
286 the first annual meeting of the board of registration of commercial interior designers following
287 the effective date of this act. The applicant, upon review and consent of the board, may be issued
288 a provisional registration and be given 3 calendar years from the first annual meeting of the
289 board following the effective date of this act to provide substantial proof to the board of
290 successful passage of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification examination, at
291 which time full registration shall be granted. If proof of passage is not provided to the board
292 within the 3-year time period, the applicant's provisional registration shall be revoked and
293 reapplication, including satisfaction of all requirements at the time of re-application, shall be
294 required for the individual to receive registration. During the time period of provisional

295 registration, the individual shall maintain all current fees and uphold all requirements for
296 registration and renewal until such time as the examination requirement is fulfilled. The board
297 may adopt its own rules and regulations governing academic and practical experience, including
298 but not limited to those guidelines published from time to time by the National Council for
299 Interior Design Qualification. The board may also adopt the examinations and recommended
300 grading procedures of the National Council for Interior Design Qualification.

301 SECTION 8. Section 4 shall not affect or reduce the tenure of members of the designer
302 selection board serving at the time of the effective date of this act.