

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1796 (Jackson) – As Amended April 16, 2026

Policy Committee: Business and Professions Vote: 13 - 1

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes a new category of licensed professional for interior designers within the California Architects Board (CAB), defines the scope of practice for professional interior design, and expands the membership of the CAB to include a professional interior designer.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Establishes the Licensed Professional Interior Designer Practice Act (Act) and requires the CAB, within the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to implement the provisions of the Act no later than July 1, 2028.
- 2) Defines “professional interior design” as offering or furnishing, or being responsible for, or in control of, the planning, design, and oversight of interior spaces, in part or in whole, in buildings and structures in California in a manner complying with generally applicable codes and regulations and provides extensive detail on what is and what is not included in this definition.
- 3) Expands the membership of the CAB to include one professional interior designer.
- 4) Vests the CAB with all of the functions, duties, powers, purposes, responsibilities, and jurisdiction concerning the practice of professional interior design under the Act.
- 5) Provides it is a misdemeanor, published by up to six months in county jail or a fine of an unspecified amount, for a person to do any of the following without possessing a valid, unrevoked license as a licensed professional interior designer:
 - a) Engage in the practice of professional interior design.
 - b) Use the titles or terms “licensed professional interior designer” or “licensed professional interior design,” or any other titles, words, or abbreviations that would imply or indicate they are licensed under the Act.
 - c) Use the stamp of a licensed professional interior designer.
 - d) Advertise to the public they are a licensed professional interior designer or qualified to engage in the practice of professional interior design.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The CAB indicates it would need to create and implement a new licensing structure, which is expected to increase applications, inquiries, outreach, and reporting. The CAB, among other things, would need to verify exam eligibility and licensing requirements, and anticipates an increase in investigative complaints.

- 1) The CAB estimates the following special fund costs:
 - a) Ongoing costs of \$255,000 annually for two permanent staff positions to support increased licensing activities. The CAB estimates receiving 671 new license applications, with each license requiring approximately 6 hours to process.
 - b) Ongoing costs of \$141,000 annually for one permanent staff position to support additional enforcement workload assuming 100 cases annually at an estimated 14 hours per case.
 - c) One-time costs of \$141,000 for one limited-term staff position to implement regulations needed to implement the bill, including exam and licensing processes, disciplinary guidelines and fines, and all other necessary regulations.
 - d) Absorbable costs of \$15,000 annually in travel costs and per diem for an additional board member.
- 2) Boards and Bureaus within DCA are “special funded,” meaning they derive their funding from fees charged to licensees. The CAB would need to establish new fees to support the new licensing structure. Because the bill does not include a specific fee, appropriate fee levels cannot be determined at this time.
- 3) The Office of Information Services (OIS), within DCA, estimates one-time IT costs of \$274,000 related to building new licensing and renewal applications in Connect and Consumer Affairs License Search (CAS). OIS indicates this cost is absorbable because of the bill’s delayed implementation date.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the International Interior Design Association. According to the author:

The absence of a Practice Act and formal license pathway in California forces commercial interior designers to practice under the oversight of other licensed professionals to engage with any part of the construction industry, like bidding for work, procuring insurance, or submitting drawings to Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs), despite being qualified to perform this work independently. The current system forces designers to relinquish ownership of their work, as they cannot stamp and seal their own drawings for permits. As a result, they do not retain ownership over their intellectual property, limiting economic opportunities.

- 2) **Background. Sunrise Analysis.** This bill proposes to establish a new category of license within the CAB, which would be required to engage in the practice of professional interior

design. Under existing law, new professional licensure proposals are subject to a legislative “sunrise” process containing nine sunrise criteria, developed in coordination with DCA, to provide a framework for evaluating the need for regulation.

The evaluation of the professional interior designer license proposed by this bill is discussed at length in the Assembly Business and Professions Committee’s analysis of this bill. Discussions with stakeholder groups about whether licensure is the most appropriate path are ongoing.

California Council for Interior Design Certification (CCIDC). Existing law establishes a certification program and title protection for certified interior designers (CIDs) and specifies the education and examination requirements for certification. The original legislation required the formation of a non-profit entity as an oversight authority. Accordingly, CCIDC was established as a nonprofit public benefit corporation with oversight authority over the certification process. CCIDC is not a state agency nor does it receive state funding.

An interior designer may voluntarily become certified and obtain a “stamp” from CCIDC by demonstrating competency through education, experience and examination. Existing law allows only certified individuals to use the term “certified interior designer” or any other language that implies certification by CCIDC. Existing law further authorizes CCIDC to issue a commercial designation to CIDs who have passed additional interior design courses and examinations.

Although not a state board, CCIDC is subject to the Legislature’s sunset review process and is undergoing that review this year. AB 2772 (Assembly Business and Professions Committee), is the sunset review vehicle for CCIDC, though the bill does not yet address the issues discussed during CCIDC’s sunset review; nor does AB 2772 reconcile an extension of CCIDC’s 2027 sunset date with the possible transition to an interior design license issued and overseen by the CAB, as proposed by this bill.

The CAB. Existing law, the Architects Practice Act, provides for the licensure and regulation of the practice of architecture in California. The CAB is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Architects Practice Act. This bill expands the membership of the CAB from 10 to 11 members by adding one professional interior designer.

- 3) **Prior Legislation.** AB 2482 (Ma), of the 2011-12 Legislative Session, would have established a California Registered Interior Designers Board within the DCA to regulate interior designers. AB 2482 died without a hearing.

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