



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

**Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 504
Before the Ohio House Economic Development, Commerce,
and Labor Committee**

May 22, 2018

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Chairman Young, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 504.

My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am the research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute**, an independent research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

Ohioans should not have to ask the state for permission to earn their living. Yet, all too often, Ohio’s occupational licensing requirements serve as “permission slip” policies that make it harder—and sometimes impossible—for Ohioans and would-be Ohioans to pursue their careers and put food on the table for their families. Such policies must end.

Enter House Bill 504. First, The Buckeye Institute appreciates that this bill is not technically a licensure bill for interior designers. As a permissive certification, the bill would effectively expand the scope of practice for those who seek the new certification.

Under the proposed bill, certified interior designers would be permitted to submit plans directly to building code officials rather than having to work under the direction or supervision of an architect or engineer, as is presently the case. These steps are better than prior proposals that would have required a license to be an interior designer. However, we continue to discourage the direct regulation of any specific profession unless there is a verifiable public safety risk.

Second, The Buckeye Institute respectfully suggests that the Committee consider clarifying potential professional liability issues that House Bill 504 may unintentionally create. Expanding the scope of practice for interior designers by permitting them to submit plans to building officials should make the certified designer—and not the architect or engineer—liable for any problems that arise from the designer’s submitted designs. As written, however, the bill does not make clear if this would in fact be the case.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions the Committee might have.

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