



The International Association of Home Staging Professionals® - IAHSP®

Dear IAHSP® Members and our Valued ASP Home Staging Community:

Recently, our IAHSP® International Board Chairwoman & Founder, Barb Schwarz, and IAHSP® President, Jennie Norris, and our IAHSP® International Board issued a position statement on behalf of IAHSP International and our membership regarding legislation surrounding the Interior Design industry and any potential impact to the Home Staging industry.

We researched extensively and put thought into our position paper, and sent it out to all members, as well as posted it online.

To further educate our IAHSP members on the truth, in a continued responsible way, we now have also invested the time and effort to **go directly to the most reliable source in regards to design legislation at the National Level in Washington, DC.** by contacting the **American Society of Interior Designers** – and we spoke directly with the **National Director of Government & Public Affairs, the Associate Director of Public Affairs, and the Government Affairs Assistant.** These individuals are responsible for legislation pertaining to the Interior Design industry and their role is to lobby for and support ASID membership and the Interior Design industry nationwide.

These are the questions we put forth to the American Society of Interior Design and below are the answers of the National Director of Government & Public Affairs, the Associate Director of Public Affairs, and the Government Affairs Assistant

The ASID Response is in BLUE and the IAHSP Feedback or TIP is in GREEN.

(For your reference, sources for accurate data pertaining to this issue are found at the end of this summary.)

1. Does the ASID legislation in any way target those in the Home Staging industry?

ASID Response: Backing up a step – the legislation is not generated by ASID. The legislation is generated by Interior Design groups and individuals at the STATE level. ASID is just one of several groups involved in supporting legislation that would better define business practices and legal recognition of the interior design profession.

From the ASID Site: *“The 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives states the powers not delegated to the federal government. Under this framework, states regulate professions that impact the health, safety and welfare of the public.”*

“Every decision an interior designer makes in one way or another affects the health, safety and welfare of the public. Those decisions include specifying furniture, fabrics and carpeting that comply with fire codes and space planning that provides proper means of egress. In addition, interior designers deal with accessibility issues, ergonomics, lighting, acoustics, and design solution for those with special needs.”

IAHSP: Home Stagers do not traditionally engage in activities that impact the health, safety and welfare of the public, and we are NOT targets of any State regulation of the Interior Design industry. **Since the structures (houses) we are working in have already met safety standards when they were constructed by the builder,** we do not have to consider those aspects when we engage in traditional Home Staging work with advising clients on what to do to prepare their houses for sale.



The International Association of Home Staging Professionals® - IAHSP®

Exceptions to this would be if you recommend remodeling to a client as part of the Home Staging process. Ensuring they comply with any building codes is the responsibility of the person conducting the work. Since that is typically NOT a Home Stager, you are not at risk.

Painting walls, changing out existing light fixtures or plumbing fixtures is not an issue of health and safety when the homeowner simply replaces what was already there. Removing walls, adjusting the structure from the original design, or enhancing things like electrical systems, is a potential building code issue.

IAHSP TIP: Always refer any upgrading or remodeling work to a licensed professional who does understand codes and laws and would properly apply any needed regulatory or safety codes and laws.

2. *What does the legislation want to achieve relative to interior designers?*

ASID Response: Based on the 10th Amendment, the regulation occurs at the State level for Interior Designers. The legislation wants to regulate those who call themselves “Registered Interior Designers” or “Certified Interior Designers” in each State. The only exemption to this would be Federal Buildings that would fall under the guidelines at the Federal Level.

Ideally, ASID would like to see all states have a consistent definition of “Interior Designers” – but since each state is responsible for enacting their own legislation and criteria, it is not expected.

IAHSP: REFERENCE SOURCE: <http://www.asid.org/legislation/state/>

When you review this link, you will see that in all cases, the states that are currently putting legislation into practice or are proposing legislation – in ALL cases – target ONLY those that call themselves “Registered Interior Designer,” “Certified Interior Designer,” or “Interior Designer.”

There is not ONE “Home Stager” title on the list. This means they are NOT targeting Home Stagers that conduct Home Staging services in a Home Staging business.



The International Association of Home Staging Professionals® - IAHSP®

3. Does the legislation target any service done for a homeowner or business or just those related to codes and safety?

ASID Response: There is a broad exemption on the books for residential and architectural work in the laws, and structures with fewer than 4 buildings are part of this broad exemption – which would apply to single family houses. **However, whenever codes and safety are involved, it is best to work with a licensed individual.** This could be a licensed contractor who remodels a house, obtaining the correct permit, or a licensed Interior Designer who understands structural safety and codes, who would engage the correct personnel to get the work done.

IAHSP: As Professional Home Stagers, we do not normally get involved in this type of work, and if you do choose to add those services to your business, IAHSP recommends that you would want to be licensed and certified to do that type of work. Otherwise, you would refer it to qualified individual.

4. If enacted, will the ASID legislation prevent someone that is a Home Stager from practicing in business?

ASID Response: No. The legislation at the state level is not targeting Home Stagers. When Home Staging is largely about residential work, it is not included in the main concerns of building codes and safety related to larger commercial work. The only state that currently regulates Interior Designers is Florida, and the laws have not translated to Home Stagers who successfully operate businesses in the state of Florida. The only exception to that would be IF the Home Stager calls himself or herself an “Interior Designer” – then they would be targeted under the auspices of that law.

From a letter by Bruce Bigham, ASID President: *“ASID will continue to support legal recognition of the profession, but not if that recognition prevents individuals from offering services such as selection of colors, materials and finishes or selection and specification of furniture, fixtures and equipment, so long as those services do not affect building code or other statute.”*

5. Does the ASID legislation prevent a person from moving decorative items (such as pillows) from one spot to another in a house or moving furniture?

ASID Response: The genesis for this unfounded fear came from the legislation passed in Alabama and people have taken that one example of a poorly written law (that was quickly overturned) to the absolute extreme, irresponsibly. The laws that are working to be enacted at the State level by Interior Design groups in no way wish to restrict what happens in an individual’s home with respect to personal decorating or moving of items from one place to another.

IAHSP: We did discuss what Home Stagers do when we rearrange furniture – with the goal to be to open up the traffic flow in a room. Again, these services are not any sort of target for the Interior Design legislation. Recommending painting walls, removal of clutter, basic upgrades that the homeowner would conduct or hire out to a licensed contractor, does not mean we are targets of any sort of legislation. (See above quote from Bruce Bigham)

6. Would the ASID legislation (if enacted) prevent a Home Stager from Staging a vacant house – bringing in furniture and placing it in rooms?



The International Association of Home Staging Professionals® - IAHSP®

ASID Response: No. The legislation does not target that aspect of the Home Staging business. If there are any regulations that would apply, it would fall under Building Codes and these are not part of the Interior Design focus. Regardless of what definitions or regulations the interior design industry is successful in implementing, if there are building codes that come in to play, that is totally separate. Since what we do in Home Staging is like moving in or out of a house as a homeowner, this is not regulated.

IAHSP: As a Home Stager if we do get involved in a unique property, it would be wise to check to make sure there are not any restrictive Building Codes in place that may be of concern in installing furniture and décor.

7. Is the goal of ASID legislation to shut down Home Staging businesses across America?

ASID Response: *Absolutely not.* They do not see us as competition for their business and see that we serve a totally different type of consumer. We are part of the Real Estate Industry as Home Stagers, and they are the Interior Design Industry. We are different industries and their intent is not to harm any Home Stagers in the Home Staging industry.

Summary:

Our positions on the IAHSP International Board are voluntary as we serve our members and the Home Staging industry at large, and yet we know this is an important concern for many of our members, because of the volume of misinformation and inaccurate positions that have been posted by outside groups. We are happy to devote our time and effort to put out yet **another thoughtful and accurate statement.**

However, at this juncture, we ask you to **TRUST** that we would not be steering our valued IAHSP members or the Home Staging community at large in the wrong direction or with the wrong focus.

Other groups may not truly understand what Home Staging is relative to our fundamental goals, our focus and our purpose. It is evident that there is confusion and they believe we are in the design industry, and that couldn't be farther from the truth.

These organizations are not always purely Home Staging groups with a Home Staging focus. Because they have allowed "anyone" to join, **they cannot serve just the Home Staging industry**, and that creates this challenge they have to deal with. Because they had no guidelines or restrictions for membership from the start, they now have issues with members that have one hand in the Home Staging business and the other in Interior Design, with no leadership making it clear that those two services and industries are totally different in goals and purpose.

We encourage you to stay focused on your ASP Home Staging Businesses and share with others you may come across that IAHSP is a **responsible** trade Association for the Home Staging industry that seeks truth and seeks support through responsible and value added services.

When and if, this legislation ever does target Home Stagers, you will be the first to learn of it through IAHSP and our now positive and friendly relationship with ASID.



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We ask you not to just “believe” positions that are held by other organization – do the research yourself to get answers if you are still concerned after reading this summation. Just as we have researched and read information and drawn conclusions, if you truly want to know if this impacts you, go to the SOURCE and get the facts yourself.

Get the facts directly and read the legislation and concerns of the interior design industry. A few of the reliable resources are listed below.

We love and support all our members and are proud of our IAHSP Association for being a **responsible** voice for the Home Staging industry.

With respect and support for you,

**Barb Schwarz, ASPM®, IAHSP®
Chairwoman and Founder, IAHSP**

**Jennie Norris, ASPM®, IAHSP®
President, IAHSP - 2009-2010**

And Your IAHSP International Board





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Additional References:

The below resources found online are full of articles and links to the actual proposed or enacted legislation on the books. If you want to do further research, we recommend the following:

“Interior Design Legislation 101” - <http://www.asid.org/NR/rdonlyres/982056F9-CBD4-4A42-9921-AE6F3B4E84D8/0/IDlegislation101.pdf>

“Health, Safety and Welfare”

<http://www.asid.org/NR/rdonlyres/EC6604D5-6173-4B52-BBDB-D6EA23AD0AED/0/HealthSafetyandWelfare2.pdf>

Letter from Bruce Brigham, FASID, President, ASID

<http://www.asid.org/legislation/Letter+from+ASID+President+Bruce+Brigham++FASID.htm>

ASID Legislation and Advocacy Resources

http://www.asid.org/ASID/CMS_Templates/Admin%20Templates/PrimaryHub.aspx?NRMODE=Published&NRNODEGUID=%7b69c8dab0-70c2-4c23-ad18-296c22f0207e%7d&NRORIGINALURL=%2flegislation%2f&NRCACHEHINT=NoModifyGuest&bhcp=1