

May 7, 2011

From the ASID National President:

To my ASID colleagues and ID network of friends....

It is early Saturday morning for me....but I wanted to let you know that it has been a remarkable 24 hours for the interior design profession.

While the Florida House of Representatives voted to deregulate the law that governs the practice of interior design in commercial interiors, the FL Senate overwhelmingly voted against that bill and this keeps the FL ID practice act in place. This was a very hard fought victory and one that came during a late night Friday session in Tallahassee that turned out to be quite a battle between the legislators. I can tell you that the design community was certainly celebrating in Florida last evening.

The American Society of Interior Designers is being given a lot of credit for helping the Florida ID Coalition and the design community.... many expressing a lot of gratitude for the Society's contributions of boots on the ground and dollars for lobbyists, paying for buses to get students to the capitol building to protest and holding public press conferences right in the rotunda of the FL Capitol Building. Don Davis and Caitlin Lewis in our ASID Government Affairs Department received high marks for their participation in this fight.

The topic was so heated that the Institute for Justice, supported by NKBA and AIA, went on Fox News in a national interview, denigrated the profession of interior design, the legislation in Florida, and calling ASID the "cartel." They told the newsman that interior design was nothing more than picking drapes, colors and wallpapers and that anyone can do that. This is also very sad for NKBA members who have told me at the grass roots level that they know nothing about such a fight and what their national leadership is doing. Some have said that NKBA has spent well over \$550,000 of members money to oppose in Florida alone. It shows the disconnect their members have with their national organization.

So that you will know, ASID has reached out to NKBA leaders to schedule a face to face meeting so that we can understand what their intent and motivation is in this opposition. We can always agree to disagree. Letters, emails and phone calls have been made to their leaders to request a dialogue but they have refused to come to the table. It was hoped that attending their national conference last week, I would have the opportunity to meet directly with their President, if only just to shake his hand. But the door was not opened to us. Not even a "No, Thank You" from him.

NKBA has already sent out a wicked email very early this morning to announce their loss and vowing they will continue to fight against interior design legislation and all interior designers. No word from Patti Morrow and the Interior Design Protection Council as yet but it is assumed that she will continue to misinform any one who will listen to her. She is very good at that.

But if that wasn't enough good news, here is the other piece.

Several months back, the Institute of Justice sued the State of Florida over its ID practice act. And they lost in the second highest court in the country... the judges stating that Florida had the right to restrict the practice of interior design in commercial interiors to those who meet education, experience and examination. The Institute appealed to the judges to re-hear their case against the State of Florida and yesterday,... their appeal was DENIED. This means that the second highest court in the land again re-affirms that interior design ~ at least in Florida ~ is a valid and distinct profession. The only place the opposition can go to get their appeal heard now is the U.S. Supreme Court.

We should all be proud of ASID and proud of our profession. We still have much work ahead thru our ASID Chapters, design coalitions in the other states and by informing members what this can mean to their businesses. Know that ASID continues to champion this cause, supporting legislation that opens the practice to include codes-based environments and ensuring members will be able to practice to the fullest extent of their abilities. And this work is more than health, safety and welfare issues. It is about business.

All in all, there was just a whole lot of good news that came out this week.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.