

Talking points

The American Institute of Architects

SPEAKER #1

INTRODUCTION

- *[Brief personal information with your names and firms. Please be sure to note your connection to the Congressional district or state.]*
- We are here on behalf of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).
- AIA is the world's largest design organization, representing over 96,000 design professionals.
- Since 1857, AIA's mission has been to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of the public, and to improve the nation's quality of life through design.
- We are here today to discuss two bipartisan and bicameral bills.
- Both bills address an issue that is critically important to our profession: the first addresses architectural design and the second promotes greater resilience in the face of natural disasters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SPEAKER #2

BACKGROUND

- AIA believes that all architectural design styles have value.
- Working through the design process, it should be up to the client and the designer to collaborate on a plan that suits the project's specific needs.
- For both private property and government buildings, the stakeholders who use buildings should have a say in how the building is designed.
- We firmly oppose any government effort to mandate or ban any architectural design style.
- It is an inappropriate overreach of federal authority to impose one design preference across the country and place mandates on jurisdictions.
- What works in Washington, DC may not work in every town in our state.
- We should celebrate our country's regional differences and push for more architectural innovation, not try to make all federal buildings look the same.



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SPEAKER #3

DEMOCRACY IN DESIGN ACT

- We support the bipartisan Democracy in Design Act.
- Led by Representatives Titus (D-NV), Simpson (R-ID), Carter (R-GA), and Norton (D-DC) in the House, and Senators Van Hollen (D-MD) and Luján (D-NM) in the Senate, these bills would prevent the federal government from mandating design styles.
- The legislation would also require that any changes to the General Service Administration's (GSA)'s Design Excellence Program undergo a public comment period, facilitating more inclusive input.
- Since the GSA's Design Excellence Program guides the federal construction and acquisition of federal buildings, which are paid for with taxpayer dollars, more transparency through this public comment period is appropriate.

YOUR "ASK"

- *[For meetings with non-cosponsors]:* Will you cosponsor this legislation?
- *[For meetings with current bill cosponsors]:* Thank you for your leadership on this legislation. How can we support you in gaining additional cosponsors?
- How can we work with you to ensure that architectural design remains a non-partisan issue?

SPEAKER #4

RESILIENCE

- The other issue we wanted to discuss with you today is resilience.
- Severe weather events are becoming more frequent and post-disaster recovery costs are growing.



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- According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), American taxpayers have spent \$721 billion to recover from natural disasters between 2017-2021 alone.
- We must do more to invest in community resilience—before disaster strikes.

RESILIENT AMERICA ACT

- The Resilient AMERICA Act (when reintroduced) would increase the amount of pre-disaster mitigation funding available through FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program.
- The BRIC program also encourages states to adopt updated building codes, which are critical to supporting resilience in the built environment.
- According to FEMA, only about half of U.S. jurisdictions have adopted hazard-resistant building codes.
- The National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) reports that adopting the latest consensus-based building codes and standards saves \$11 for every \$1 invested in post-disaster recovery.

SPEAKER #5

YOUR “ASK”

- *[For meetings with non-cosponsors]* Will you join the Resilient AMERICA Act as an original cosponsor before it is reintroduced in the House/ introduced in the Senate?
- *[For meetings with a cosponsor from the last Congress]* Thank you for cosponsoring this bill last Congress. Will you reintroduce the bill this Congress as an original cosponsor?
- How can architects help elevate resilience issues with your colleagues?

