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Statement Regarding Recent “American Board of Architecture” Announcement

January 9, 2017

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) has a membership composed of the 54 U.S. jurisdictional licensing boards. Each of these boards are created by statutory authority to oversee the licensure process and status regarding registered architects in their jurisdiction.

An announcement issued by the recently created “American Board of Architects (ABA)” claims that it is “writing new licensing exams and reforming state board [sic] of examiners to ensure qualified, unbiased public representation in law making bodies.” Only state and jurisdictional governments have the authority to form, or reform, their boards. Regarding examination, all U.S. jurisdictions use the Architect Registration Examination® (ARE®) as produced by NCARB; some jurisdictions overlay additional examination components.

NCARB continues to utilize hundreds of architect volunteers from around the U.S., as well as non-architects who are pursuing licensure, public members of jurisdictional boards, and executives managing jurisdictional boards, to develop policies and procedures that compose the models for the path to architectural licensure. More specifically, in 2016 NCARB revised the ARE, overhauled its experience program now known as the Architectural Experience Program® (AXP®), and shepherded nearly 20 academic programs in the Integrated Path to Architectural Licensure (IPAL) initiative.

We welcome feedback, new ideas, critiques of existing programs, and opportunities to dialogue with the public as we work to continuously improve the toolkit supplied to U.S. jurisdictions. We visit the over 120 accredited academic programs every two years, host numerous outreach events in the field, and invite participation in our regular online webinars and online communities.

The ABA announcement claims a need to “expel corruption and make the licensing process fair.” But these comments demonstrate a lack of knowledge regarding the professionalism and high ethical commitment of the jurisdictional staffs, NCARB staff, and volunteers. These comments ignore the use of science in NCARB’s examination development, and the national consensus NCARB uses to develop the framework for licensure.

We welcome input from representatives of the ABA and other interested parties so that we are best positioned to serve jurisdictional boards, and the public, in pursuing the mission to protect everyone's health, safety, and welfare. The framework for architectural licensure has evolved rapidly in the past several years, and, as a result, record numbers are pursuing licensure. All of this information, and more, is available on our website at www.ncarb.org. Through building community, which requires listening to all voices, we truly can go further.



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