



June 13, 2017

Hon. Jumaane D. Williams, Chair
Committee on Housing and Buildings
New York City Council
250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 14th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

Re: Intro 1307-A

On behalf of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architect (AIANY) and its over 5,500 architects and affiliate members, we submit our opposition to Intro 1307-A, a bill to amend the City Charter in relation to the minimum qualifications for Department of Building inspectors.

As the professional trade organization representing registered architects, AIANY has a longstanding tradition of working with the New York City Department of Buildings on a variety of initiatives aimed at positively impacting the physical and social qualities of our city. In addition, our members work alongside and in partnership with the Department of Buildings and their inspectors daily.

Our members are witness to a Buildings Department that has taken immense steps in terms of efficiency, transparency and service yet continually remains understaffed considering the historic levels of development seen throughout our five boroughs. Our members also appreciate the continually changing industry in which inspectors work and the steps already in place by the Department to train inspectors.

Furthermore, AIANY acknowledges the Department's need for hiring more inspectors. We agree that this is in the best interest of the Department, our profession and the public. However, when considering the public's health, safety and welfare, quantity is not a justifiable replacement for quality. The Building Department needs more experienced and qualified inspectors, not less.

The proposed minimum qualifications are too lenient and too far-removed from the current qualifications. There are specific types of positions where lowering the minimum qualifications should be considered. However, the proposed qualifications are not reasonably appropriate to the responsibilities of inspecting construction work for performance quality and code compliance.

AIANY applauds the work of Commissioner Chandler and his staff for the improvement they've brought to the Department. While we have full faith this bill would be carried out with the best of intentions by the current administration, we cannot know with surety future administrations will demonstrate such understanding, and therefore feel the City Charter should continue to uphold the qualifications it has currently set for this important position.

We encourage this Committee and the Department of Buildings to create a comprehensive proposal in order to address the pressing needs of the Department. AIANY and our members offer our continued support in this effort.

Submitted on behalf of AIANY.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benjamin Prosky". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Benjamin Prosky
Executive Director

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