To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

Pursuant to Part the Second, Chapter I, Section I, Article II of the Constitution of the Commonwealth, I am returning unsigned House Bill No. 4731, “An Act Relative to Interior Designers Bidding on State Contracts.”

This bill amends the statutory provisions governing the selection of architects and engineers for public building projects, as set forth in sections 38A½ through 38O of chapter 7 of the General Laws, to include interior designers among the individuals who are subject to those provisions.

Contrary to the suggestion conveyed by the title of the Act, the statutory amendments contained in the bill are not needed to permit interior designers to bid independently for state contracts that involve solely interior design work. To the extent that the Commonwealth chooses to use outside firms, rather than in-house staff, for such jobs, interior designers may compete for the work already through the procurement rules that apply, under the oversight of the Operational Services Division, to contracts for goods and services. Instead, the true effect of this legislation is to expand the jurisdiction of the state’s Designer Selection Board, under Section 38C of Chapter 7, by shifting the responsibility for selecting interior designers to the
Board. That duty would be added to the responsibility that the Board already possesses for selecting architects and engineers on significant public building projects.

I am concerned that adding interior designers to the Board’s jurisdiction will overburden it and cause delay in the Commonwealth’s high priority building projects, including projects that the state hopes to commence in connection with the recently enacted capital bond bills. Further, I am not persuaded of the need to apply the Board’s rigorous qualifications review process to the selection of interior designers, particularly in light of the existing procurement rules that already govern this process.

For all of these reasons, I return House Bill No. 4731 unsigned.

Respectfully submitted,

DEVAL L. PATRICK,
Governor