



Issue Brief

The American Institute of Architects • Government Advocacy • Federal Issue Position and Analysis

Key Points

- *Only a licensed professional architect has the necessary skills to be a successful Architect of the Capitol.*
- *The U.S. Capitol Building is one of the most symbolically important and architecturally impressive structures in the nation. Only a licensed architect should be entrusted to care for this prized national treasure.*
- *Congress and the Administration must act expeditiously to nominate and confirm a qualified Architect of the Capitol*

Make the Next Architect of the Capitol a Licensed Professional Architect

AIA Position

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) strongly believes the next Architect of the Capitol should be a licensed professional architect.

Action Sought

The AIA urges the President to nominate and Congress confirm a licensed, professional architect as the next Architect of the Capitol.

Explanation and Justification

The United States Capitol is among the most symbolically important and architecturally impressive buildings in the nation. The Architect of the Capitol is the steward of the safety and health of all occupants of the Capitol complex. It would not be in the interest of Congress to have a person in this position making decisions about the safety and health of building occupants without the education, training, and experience of a licensed professional architect.

The Capitol and its campus are one of our national treasures. Any future renovations or new construction by the Architect of the Capitol must consider the national significance of the project, the intricate security concerns that must be addressed, and the fact that the Capitol complex is not only a symbol of our nation but a functioning work-place as well. Only a licensed professional architect has the skills necessary to balance these difficult factors that will be included in any project in the Capitol complex.

The AIA believes that all viable candidates for the position of Architect of the Capitol must possess a variety of attributes in order to receive serious consideration:

- Experience in managing large scale construction and renovation projects
- Significant skills in diplomatically resolving issues presented by elected officials, planning boards, security personnel, and community leaders
- Consummate design/architectural skills
- Ability to oversee complex schedules and tight budgets
- Detailed knowledge of the most recent advances in building security and safety technologies
- Knowledge of the science of preservation of historic structures and sustainability

Only a licensed professional architect has the education, training and experience to possess all of these necessary skills.

What America Thinks: In a recent nationwide poll of voters (1,000 sample, margin of error +/- 3.1) conducted by two respected national pollsters—The Tarrance Group, a Republican firm, and Lake Snell and Perry, a Democratic firm—89 percent of those polled agreed with the statement that it is “important that the next Architect of the Capitol be a licensed architect who is an expert in the design and preservation of historic buildings.”