

**Pennsylvania House of Representatives Professional Licensure Committee Public
Hearing on Senate Bill 612**

Landscape Architects Continuing Education Requirements

March 4, 2008

Testimony of State Senator Stewart J. Greenleaf

I would like to thank Chairman Sturla and the members of the House Professional Licensure Committee for holding this public hearing on my legislation, Senate Bill 612, to update the Landscape Architects' Registration Law (LARL) of 1965 governing the licensure requirements for landscape architects.

Since 1965, landscape architecture has evolved into a professional institution that has flourished along with the American ethic for creating outdoor spaces that enrich our communities and improve our quality of life. Landscape architects have been responsible for improving open space, community parks and recreation areas, and managing the wild and rural landscapes that have become our national treasures.

Modern day landscape architects are charged with developing strategies to contend with the pressure to develop land to accommodate a growing population and the demand for a high standard of living which has accelerated the movement to preserve natural areas.

Today, thousands across the United States are responding to the growing need. More than 70 programs in landscape architecture exist at 53 colleges and universities nationwide.

Pennsylvania's professional licensing standards for this profession should now reflect the value of and demand for landscape architects and be in line with the standards set across the United States.

In 1994, the Pennsylvania General Assembly amended the LARL to require landscape architects to complete continuing education courses as a condition of license renewal. Act 107 required that each licensed landscape architect obtain ten hours of mandatory continuing education every two years to maintain licensure. My legislation raises the continuing education requirement from ten hours per license period to 24 hours per license period. Increasing the number of hours necessary to fulfill the continuing education requirement for license renewal will further promote the professionalism of landscape architects.

Senate Bill 612 also deletes the grandfather clause in the LARL which permits certain individuals to be registered and licensed to practice landscape architecture without a written examination. The State Board of Landscape Architects is permitted to waive the written examination to an applicant for licensure who has ten years of active experience

as a landscape architect and who is a graduate of an approved institution, or who has 15 years of active experience without graduating from an approved institution.

Under the grandfather clause, a candidate meeting the required experience and education requirements is then subject to a one hour interview by the State Board of Landscape Architects who then must review a work product before determining if a candidate is approved for license renewal.

While this grandfather provision may have served a purpose when this law was first enacted in 1965, I believe that this language has long since outlived its need. Similar provisions have been deleted from other Pennsylvania registration and licensure laws such as those regulating geologists and land surveyors.

Furthermore, a standardized examination would ensure that all landscape architects are proficient in the most advanced areas of their profession.

Today, I ask for this committee's favorable consideration of SB 612 for the enhancement of the profession of landscape architecture in Pennsylvania.

Thank you.