



**AIA**  
Seattle

February 7, 2020

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

James B. Sherk, Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy  
Via email: [james.b.sherk@who.eop.gov](mailto:james.b.sherk@who.eop.gov)

Re: Making Federal Buildings Beautiful Again

**AIA Seattle**  
**The American Institute**  
**of Architects**

Center for Architecture &  
Design  
1010 Western Ave  
Seattle, WA 98104

T (206) 448 4938

[aiaseattle.org](http://aiaseattle.org)

Dear President Trump:

The American Institute of Architects – Seattle, on behalf of our member architects, strongly oppose the Administration’s draft policy to promote a single style of architecture for federal buildings across the country. This top-down approach will cut local community voices out of the design process and prevent these important buildings from being reflective of our time.

Classical architecture has tremendous value, but so do other architectural styles. Depending on the needs of the community—including regional preferences, topography, weather, the site context, the history of the community—a regional, site specific approach to the design is most appropriate.

Limiting design alternatives through this executive order would put a small number of individuals in Washington, D.C., in charge of design decisions affecting communities they may never visit and may not be familiar with. Wherever possible, federal buildings should incorporate local design preferences to reflect the fundamental truth that our government represents and is accessible to the people whom it serves. Additionally, limiting the style of architecture for federal buildings would discriminate against architectural design firms who are skilled in other design methodologies.

As reported by Architectural Record, the *Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture*, which this draft order proposes to rewrite, was authored by the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Moynihan wrote that Federal architecture “must provide visual testimony to the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the American government.” He also believed that “an official style must be avoided,” and that new buildings should reflect their time.

Like Moynihan, we believe a uniform style mandate for federal architecture would fail to reflect our rich nation's diverse places, thought, culture, and climates. We strongly maintain that all architectural styles have value and all communities have the right to weigh in on the government buildings meant to serve them.

We urge you to reject this draft executive order.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LR', written in a cursive style.

Lisa Richmond  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Meredith Everist', written in a cursive style.

Meredith Everist  
President