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**Tavia Galonski**  
**State Representative**

Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 510  
February 28, 2018

Chairman Ginter, Vice Chairwoman LaTourette, Ranking Member Boyd, and my colleagues on the Community and Family Advancement Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 510.

House Bill 510 concerns parental disposition of a deceased child when one of the parents has abandoned the child. First and foremost this bill does not impede the laws pertaining to the right of disposition, but rather elaborates on parental rights in regards to disposition. In the case where a parent has abandoned a child, the other parent only needs to make a good faith effort to notify the absent parent of the child's death. Once that effort is made, the entity handling the disposition of the child will have an affidavit on file noting that a good faith effort of contact was made and if it was successful or not. Regardless of successful contact or not, the active parent is not required to obtain the consent or input from the absent parent regarding matters of disposition of the child's remains.

This bill is a result of a heartbreaking situation a constituent was subjected to. After the death of her child, she had to obtain the permission of the child's father in order to cremate the child's remains. The father had not been in contact with the child for years and still his input was necessary for these final decisions. Not only was there no relationship between the child and the father, but also significant emotional distress for the mother as she was just trying to put her child to rest.

With the rise of the opioid epidemic, it is not unlikely that more cases like this will arise. We need to attempt to reduce the emotional and bureaucratic frustration during an already difficult situation. If a parent so chooses to abandon a child, they have actively chosen to not be part of their life and ultimately their death. Hinging final burial arrangements on their input is nothing but hurtful to the parent that has been part of the child's life from beginning to end.

Chairman Ginter, Vice Chairwoman LaTourette, Ranking Member Boyd, and my fellow colleagues, thank you for letting me speak today. I am open for questions and points of clarification in regards to House Bill 510.