

**TESTIMONY OF
KIRK ROBERTS
ON BEHALF OF THE
OHIO CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
REGARDING SENATE BILL 224
BEFORE THE
HOUSE CIVIL JUSTICE COMMITTEE
May 3, 2022**

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Golonski and members of the Committee, my name is Kirk Roberts. I am the President of Sherwood Memorial Gardens, Roberts Funeral Homes and American Cemetery Services in Wooster. I have worked in the cemetery industry in Ohio for thirty-three years. I am currently the Chairman of the Ohio Cemetery Dispute Resolution Commission. I have been a licensed funeral director in Ohio since 1996. Finally, I am the President of the Ohio Cemetery Association and the Chair of the OCA's Legislative Committee and a member of its Board of Directors. I offer my testimony today on behalf of the OCA.

When SB 224 was introduced in the Senate, the OCA immediately identified and objected to several provisions that would have been anti-competitive and detrimental to cemeteries and consumers. After two interested party meetings and eight hearings, the Bill was amended to remove all such objectionable provisions and replace them with a new Section Three.

Section Three of the Bill requires the Ohio Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors to study and issue a Report to the General Assembly regarding the trusting requirements, in the other states, for caskets sold on a preneed basis. The Report is due within three months of the effective date of Section Three. As such, we believe that Section Three effectively transfers the disagreement between the cemetery and funeral industries regarding such topic to the next General Assembly or beyond.

Therefore, the OCA is pleased to support SB 224 as it was referred to this Committee. We believe that the Bill now only contains provisions that will benefit funeral homes and Ohio citizens.

I would be pleased to address any questions.