



SCI Ohio Funeral Services

Testimony to Senate Bill 224

Ohio Senate General Government Budget Committee

December 7, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee, Service Corporation International (SCI) Shared Resources is North America's leading provider of funeral, crematory, and cemetery services. Our nearly 25,000 associates serve more than 450,000 families who turn to us each year to care for their loved ones. In Ohio, we own and operate 29 funeral homes and 15 cemeteries in 38 cities and 19 counties. In 2020, we served over 6,200 families and employed over 500 individuals across the state.

While we appreciate the efforts SB 224 does to improve regulations for funeral homes, we are writing to express our continued opposition to the legislation. Throughout the committee process, SCI Funeral Services expressed concerns that two provisions of SB 224 would unfairly dually regulate Ohio cemeteries. As members of both the Ohio Funeral Directors Association and the Ohio Cemetery Association, our organization proposed several compromises to no avail.

The amendment on the cemetery preneed goods provision goes from bad to worse for the following reasons:

- AM_134_2281-1 exempts certain non-profit cemeteries from the bill's additional preneed regulation while keeping the provision that requires all other cemeteries to be dually regulated by the Department of Commerce (Chapter 1721 of the Revised Code) and the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors (Chapter 4717.31 to .38).
- The amendment sets up two different standards in the cemetery industry, and puts for-profit cemeteries at a regulatory disadvantage with mostly for-profit funeral homes that sell pre-need goods. Funeral homes would continue to be regulated by one regulator and can sell insurance for preneed contracts.
- No consumer protection issues or complaints by non-profit cemeteries or regulators were raised. Furthermore, the statutes significantly conflict, causing marketplace and regulatory confusion.
- The Ohio cemeteries negatively impacted include:

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Forest Hill Cemetery Mgmt.	4414 Cleveland Ave NW	Canton
Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens	5600 East Broad Street	Columbus
Forest Lawn Memorial Park Mgmt. Co.	5600 East Broad Street	Columbus
Glen Haven Memorial Gardens	8200 West National Road	New Carlisle
Holly Memorial Gardens	73360 Pleasant Grove	Colerain
Independent Funeral Home and Cemetery Division	11475 Northlake Drive	Cincinnati
Knollwood Cemetery	1678 SOM Center Road	Mayfield Heights
MeM SCI Funeral Home and Cemetery	11475 Northlake Drive	Cincinnati
Miami Valley Memory Gardens	1639 East Lytle-Five Points	Centerville
Newark Memorial Gardens	4244 MARION RD	Newark
Ottawa Hills Memorial Park	4210 West Central Ave	Ottawa Hills
Rose Hill Burial Park	2421 Princeton Rd.	Fairfield Township
Rose Hill Burial Park	4781 South Charleston Road	Springfield
Rose Hill Burial Park	3653 W Market St	Fairlawn
Sunset Cemetery	6959 West Broad Street	Galloway
Sunset Hills Memory Gardens	5001 Everhard Rd NW.	Canton
Valley View Memorial Gardens	170 N Valley Rd	Xenia
Whitehaven Memorial Park	615 SOM Center Road	Mayfield Village

Therefore, we are asking for your favorable consideration of AM_134_2410 instead. The amendment includes all other provisions as drafted in Amendment No. AM_134_2281-1 but removes the cemetery provisions of the bill that dually regulates Ohio cemeteries. We support the amendment for the following reasons:

- The amendment removes language that dually regulates cemeteries
 - If SB 224 is enacted, cemeteries will become subject to two separate regulatory bodies and will hurt the ability of cemeteries to financially operate and preserve and maintain cemetery grounds
- The amendment ensures marketplace competition
 - SB 224 raises serious antitrust concerns, and if enacted, cemeteries will fall to additional regulations by the Ohio Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. Such regulations could monopolize the marketplace and make it impossible for cemeteries to competitively sell funeral goods on a preneed basis
- The amendment keeps SB 224 focused on funeral home reform without harming the cemetery industry

Should the Senate General Budget and Government Committee accept AM_134_2410, SCI Ohio Funeral Services would respectfully support SB 224. We hope you will favorably consider the enclosed amendment and are more than willing to discuss this issue outside of SB 224.

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