



OHIO FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

Testimony to the Ohio House of Representatives Finance Committee

March 13, 2025

Chairman Stewart, Vice Chairman Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee - thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Tracy McAdams and I serve as Secretary/Treasurer with the Ohio Funeral Directors Association (OFDA). Since 1881, the OFDA has provided innovative programs, leadership, and excellence in services provided to its membership. As one of the largest state associations for funeral professionals in the nation, representing more than 900 funeral homes in the state, OFDA has become a conduit for promoting the funeral profession and leading the field in education standards.

I would like to address several proposed amendments to House Bill 96 related to funeral practices in Ohio, all of which aim to improve the service and experience for both Ohio families and the funeral profession.

Travel Protection Plans

Currently, Travel Protection Plans are presented separately from preneed funeral contracts. Travel Protection Plans assist families in transporting family members when a death occurs 75 miles or more from the legal residence, and service providers arrange to transport decedents back home for funeral services. Travel Protection Plans are not listed as a line item on preneed contracts but are offered as an additional plan when preneed funeral contracts are funded. This is explained to families by funeral professionals, emphasizing that the funding for the Travel Protection Plan is separate from the preneed contract.

Clarifying the language surrounding prepaid funeral plans will benefit both funeral homes and families, ensuring transparency and better understanding. Keeping travel protection plans separate from preneed contracts provides a two-fold benefit: it safeguards the consumer's interests while allowing funeral homes to maintain clear and accurate contracts.

Funeral Director-Only Certification Program

We strongly support any well-planned expedited pathway to funeral director-only licensure. This program will benefit both the profession and Ohio's workforce by creating a clear, efficient path to licensure for funeral directors. By increasing instruction and training through a certification program, we can shorten apprenticeship times, ensuring that those seeking licensure receive more uniform instruction.

This initiative will provide two key benefits:

1. Funeral homes will gain from more uniformity in the instruction and training of apprentices.
2. Apprentices will benefit from consistent, high-quality instruction that may not always be provided by the funeral home where they are servicing their apprenticeship. Additionally, this uniformity will be reflected in their preparation for national and state board exams, which are crucial for licensure.

Cremation in Religion Exemption Language

Ohio is experiencing an increasing diversity in cultural and religious burial and cremation practices. Any language that helps funeral professionals navigate these diverse rites strengthens the trust between funeral homes and the communities they serve. Clear communication and understanding of cultural and religious preferences in cremation and burial practices is key to fostering stronger relationships with families.

Cremation Authorization: Removal of Mandatory Signature Witness

The removal of the mandatory signature witness for cremation authorization is critical, particularly in cases where funeral arrangements are not made in person with the next of kin. Often, there is uncertainty of who is signing the required documents when signed remotely, and this change will streamline the process for families and funeral directors. This is especially important in an age where electronic authorizations are increasingly common, particularly when next of kin are unable to travel to the funeral home.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these amendments. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.