



The Ohio Senate
136th General Assembly
Senate Health Committee
Thursday, May 8, 2025
9:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee. My name is Jarrod Williams, and I serve as the executive director at the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Board regarding its FY 2026-2027 biennium budget request.

The mission of the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors is to protect consumers and regulate the funeral profession and cremation services to ensure competency and ethical behavior.

The Board is comprised of seven members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Five members are licensed practicing funeral directors, four of which are also licensed practicing embalmers with at least ten consecutive years of experience in Ohio. One of the funeral directors also holds a crematory operator permit. In addition to the licensed members, two members of the Board represent the public; one being at least sixty years of age. The Board office staff consists of eight total employees, three facility inspectors and one auditor work in the field.

In accordance with Chapter 4717 of the Revised Code, the Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors serves as Ohio's regulatory body to license and regulate individuals to work in the state's funeral services profession. The Board issues nine license types to eligible individuals to practice or operate as a funeral services professional: certified embalmer apprenticeship, certified funeral director apprenticeship, crematory operator permit, embalmer, funeral director, courtesy card permit, crematory facility, embalming facility, and funeral home facility. There are approximately 6,700 active licenses issued under these categories across Ohio.

The Board's budget proposal request for FY 2026 is \$1,406,000. Requested funding for FY 2027 is \$1,463,000 for a total of \$2,869,000 over the biennium.

The Board's operations are supported by licensing fees and other receipts deposited into the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund as required by Ohio Revised

Code. Payroll costs for full-time personnel and board member compensation are expected to account for about \$2M of the budget request. Approximately 13% of the requested funding is for supplies and maintenance for ordinary, regular expenditures related to the eLicense system, billing for fleet management, information technology, and rent.

In addition to licensing and regulatory oversight, the Board reviews and approves quality continuing education program applications from people or organizations that contribute to professional competencies in the practice of cremation, embalming, and funeral directing.

Further, the Board oversees two significant programs helpful to Ohioans.

The Preneed Recovery Fund serves as a consumer protection fund. The fund's purpose is to reimburse purchasers of a preneed funeral contract who have suffered a financial loss as a result of malfeasance, misfeasance, default, failure, or insolvency in connection with the sale of a preneed funeral contract by a licensee. The fund was implemented in late 2017 with the help of House Bill Number 48 passed by the 132nd General Assembly after board investigations discovered evidence of misappropriation of consumer's preneed funeral contract funds. Affected consumers may submit a claim for reimbursement through the board's application form.

To date the Board has issued a total of \$193,991.96 in reimbursement payments to consumers or a designated assignee.

The Indigent Burial and Cremation Support Program serves Ohio's cities, municipalities, villages, and townships. The purpose of this program is to reimburse local government entities for the cost of providing burials or cremations to indigent deceased individuals. The program is supported by GRF appropriation. From FY 2020 to FY 2023, the Board issued \$1,404,021.99 in reimbursement payments to local governments. The Board requests \$250,000 in each fiscal year to continue providing this support to local communities.

In closing, the Board has a responsibility to protect, serve, and support Ohioans during some of the most stressful periods of their lives. While dealing with death is never easy, it is important to have qualified, dedicated professionals who help families through loss and bereavement during times of need.

The Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors is grateful for the opportunity to share our story and seeks your continued support. I am grateful for your time and attention, and I welcome your questions.