



**OHIO FUNERAL
DIRECTORS
ASSOCIATION**

**Proponent Testimony | Senate Bill 97
Senate Transportation Committee
November 18, 2025**

Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Ohio Senate Transportation Committee: My name is Andrea Graumlich. I am a licensed funeral director in Columbus. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 97 on behalf of the Ohio Funeral Directors Association.

Since 1881, the Ohio Funeral Directors Association (OFDA) has represented and supported funeral service professionals across the state through education, advocacy, and leadership. As one of the nation's largest and most established state associations for funeral directors, OFDA plays a critical role in upholding high professional and ethical standards within the industry. Today, more than 900 Ohio funeral homes are members of OFDA, benefitting from specialized resources, continuing education, and compliance support that enhance service to families and communities throughout Ohio.

Every day, funeral directors and their staff coordinate processions that allow families, friends, and communities to honor their loved ones with the respect they deserve. Unfortunately, funeral directors often witness instances in which drivers ignore processions or illegally merge into these processions, endangering participants and disrupting a deeply meaningful moment of mourning.

Senate Bill 97 provides an important and reasonable deterrent to this dangerous behavior by doubling fines for motorists who unlawfully interfere with a funeral procession. These penalties send a clear message that reckless disregard for a funeral procession is not merely discourteous; it is unsafe and disrespectful to grieving families and the professionals working to serve them.

Funeral directors already implement extensive measures to ensure that processions are conducted safely and efficiently. These measures often include coordination with local law enforcement, the use of marked vehicles, and professional traffic escorts.

Earlier this year, a colleague in Miami County recounted an incident involving a paid motorcycle escort who was nearly struck by a vehicle approximately a mile from the funeral home after departing with the procession. The driver attempted to cut through the line of vehicles, narrowly avoiding a serious accident.

Similarly, in June, my sister was leading a funeral procession in Columbus along State Route 104, accompanied by a motorcycle escort. The escort had stopped traffic on the entrance ramp from Alum Creek Drive, yet several vehicles disregarded the procession, speeding through the intersection at U.S. Route 33 and narrowly missing vehicles participating in the procession.

Despite the precautions taken by funeral directors—often in coordination with law enforcement and professional traffic escorts—drivers who choose to disregard traffic laws endanger everyone on the road. Strengthening the penalty structure will reinforce public accountability, enhance awareness, and promote safer travel for all Ohioans.

On behalf of the funeral service community, we commend Senator Wilson and Senator Craig for their leadership on this issue. We respectfully urge the committee to advance SB 97 to ensure Ohio law properly reflects the seriousness of interrupting a funeral procession.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to any questions you may have.