



**POLICE MOTORCYCLE ESCORT**  
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**Individual Testimony Senate Bill 97**

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Chair Patton, Vice-Chair Schaffler, Ranking Member Leader Antonio, and members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for allowing me to provide Testimony on Senate Bill 97 with reference to increased penalties for failing to yield to a funeral procession

I began my law enforcement career in 1967 and began escorting funerals using a motorcycle in 1969. In 1980 I, along with six other deputies started our company 'Police Motorcycle Escort'. In 2001 we broke ties with the Franklin County Sheriff and continued operation as a private company serving Franklin County and the five (5) adjacent counties.

In addition to the requirement of headlights on and the display of a funeral flag, several years ago I instructed the funeral homes we serviced and my escorts to have those cars in the procession turn on their emergency flashers to enhance the safety of the procession and to make other drivers even more aware.

During those 56 years we have experienced numerous violations of drivers and others failing to yield to the funeral processions we are escorting and I would like to point out a few that created disruptions and harm to the procession as a whole.

Example #1:

The Escort had a procession leaving a church in Dublin, Ohio and allowing all vehicles to exit the drive north on a two lane road, he proceeded north beside the procession. A vehicle waiting on a side street decided to cut through the line of funeral cars and into the path of the Escort motorcycle. As a result, the motorcycle was a total loss and the escort was injured.

During a conversation with the insurance company of the vehicle driver, the adjuster stated he was denying any claim for the Ohio Law stated one had to Yield to a Funeral Procession but it did not say anything about cutting through the line of cars in the procession. It left the matter to interpretation of 'Failing to Yield

### Example #2:

The Escort turned the procession from one road to a four lane road and put the procession in the right travel lane. The motorcycle then proceeded in the left travel lane beside the marked funeral cars. A vehicle sitting in the drive of a shopping center decided to try and beat the lead vehicle by crossing the two traveled lanes but did not see the Escort coming up the free lane and pulled out in front of the motorcycle Escort causing a "T-Bone" Accident. As a result, the motorcycle was a total loss and the escort was injured. Drivers feel that if they can get ahead of the procession, the Escort will move them through an intersection and they do not have to move over to allow the funeral to pass. This just keeps interrupting the procession and causing a traffic problem.

### Example #3:

The procession was leaving the funeral home and directed by the Escort to use the left travel lane of a four (4) lane roadway. Once all cars exited the driveway, the escort traveled in the right lane beside the procession. A vehicle traveling northbound wanted to turn left and decided to cut through the processing and into the path of the motorcycle Escort causing another accident. It again resulted in the loss of a motorcycle and the Escort received injury.

I bring these examples to your attention for it is a situation we deal with daily as funeral Escorts. Not all of those trying to beat a procession or cutting through are the result of accidents but they do cause an interruption in the procession and at times completely separate funeral vehicles from the procession itself.

I should also mention those drivers who join a procession, not part, and turn on their headlights and follow through intersections to get through traffic. The Escort tries to keep track of the number of cars to prevent such violations. There are also others who steal funeral flags and use them when the opportunity arises to join into a procession and acting as a participant.

I have one observation to make. Although the Ohio O.R.C. does refer to funeral processions, Escort vehicles and Yielding the Right of Way etc. The Ohio Driver Training Curriculum (Used by all driver training schools) mentions **nothing** about Funeral Processions. Neither does the Bureau of Motor Vehicle Ohio Driver Manual HSY7607. This is a topic that deserves attention.

Authority has been given to Drivers of First Responder Equipment and School Bus Drivers to report those drivers who do not Yield to an emergency vehicle or pass a school bus that is loading and unloading its' passengers. Perhaps the same authority should be given to Funeral Escorts and Funeral Directors so as to help with enforcement.

Chairman Patton and members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this important issue and commend your attention and consideration of Senate Bill 97.