



**SCI Ohio Funeral Services**

**Testimony to Senate Bill 224**

**Ohio Senate General Government Budget Committee**

**March 1, 2022**

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate General Government Budget Committee, thank you for the continued opportunity to express the opinions of Service Corporation International (SCI) Ohio Funeral Services on SB 224.

SCI 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 41 funeral homes and 15 cemeteries in 38 cities and 19 counties. In 2020, we served over 6,200 families and employed over 5000 individuals across the state.

First, we thank Chairman Peterson and Committee members for their efforts to remove the provisions in SB 224 that would create any dual regulations for the cemetery industry. As members of both the Ohio Cemetery Association and the Ohio Funeral Directors Association, SCI Shared Resources worked diligently to ensure our cemeteries and funeral homes can operate in the best interest of our consumers without overly burdensome regulations in either industry. The proposed amendment, as we understand it, has made progress on these fronts.

Second, as we have previously expressed in testimony to SB 224, state regulators nor the industry can point to any overt consumer protection problems with Ohio's cemetery trust levels. The trust level debate remains largely a competitive dispute between the industries over preneed merchandise, namely the sale of caskets. As a leader in both industries, SCI does share remaining concerns that the bill's new arbitrary higher trust levels falls out of sync with national standards, posing more trouble for cemeteries than funeral homes.

While SCI is now neutral on SB 224's regulatory framework with the amendment's passage, we hope our two Industry associations can find the opportunity to compromise on a fair trust rate as the bill proceeds through the process. Thank you for allowing SCI to provide testimony on SB 224.

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