

5/27/15

Senate Committee on Business and Transportation
Senator Lee Beyer, Chairman
Re: HB 3242

Thank you Chair Beyer and members of the committee:

For the record my name is Wally Ordeman and I'm a funeral director from Albany and represent the Oregon Funeral Directors Association (OFDA).

HB 3242 was introduced by the OFDA to try and get in front of an issue that could and will be problematic for every community in the state. Cemeteries large and small, urban and rural, can lose their credentials to operate because of abandonment, bankruptcy, or disciplinary action. Currently the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board (OMCB) has no authority to appoint someone to take care of at-need burials. That is to say, those people who currently own cemetery property cannot hold memorialization services in unlicensed cemeteries when those cemeteries have lost their status as a cemetery.

The basic premise of this bill is to allow the OMCB the authority to issue "day passes" to qualified industry people so that burials can take place in a timely manner. These day passes would be temporary, and issued on a case by case basis. This bill we've introduced is considered by the industry to be "emergent," and we will encourage that a work group of all stakeholders be formed to provide a more permanent fix to this very real problem.

With an aging population of Oregon's volunteer fraternal organizations and cemetery caretakers, as well as other financial struggles of Oregon's cemeteries, the threat of cemetery abandonment becomes more real every day.

The OFDA strongly encourages the passage of HB 3242, has heard of no opposition, and would like to participate in the efforts of any future work group that is formed for permanent resolutions to this issue.

Thank you for considering the position of the Oregon Funeral Directors Association.

Sincerely,
Wally Ordeman
Lobbyist, OFDA

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