

Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood

HB 3243 – Indigent Disposition

SUPPORT – ADDITIONAL HEARING TESTIMONY

Prepared by Cascade Funeral Directors, Inc.

(A Family Owned Oregon Business)

Dear members of the committee,

I have reached out to all of you regarding my support of HB 3243 and there are some important facts that I'd like to clarify with each of you. These things have not been mentioned previously as I was unaware of opposition to this bill until recently; I was trying to spare all of you from unnecessary facts and communications.

The reality is, my family owned business is more impacted by this bill than any other business on Oregon and the families we serve are equally impacted. Without drawing attention to ourselves, my company serves the residents of this state in ways the general public would not be aware of, or even understand.

I'd like to help each of you to go into this with an educated understanding of how we care for Oregon's indigent decedents.

My company supports the Oregon Indigent Disposition Fund and Oregon families in the following ways:

1. As a family owned business, we will serve more Oregon families this year than any other death care provider in Oregon. In this process, my company will be responsible for collecting approximately \$84,000.00 in death certificate filing fees this year and we will turn these funds over to "whoever ends up managing this fund" (those fees are divided between the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board and the Oregon Indigent Disposition Fund). At no charge, we act as the collection agency for these funds.
2. Our company will care for approximately 25% of Oregon's indigent decedent dispositions this year.
3. In our company, 45.3% of our clients choose credit cards as a method of payment. When this occurs, my company absorbs the credit card processing fees on the death certificate filing fee and we submit payment to the fund's management by way of a business check at the close of every business week.
4. When a decedent is indigent, and we file for reimbursement from the fund, my company pays the entire \$20 death certificate filing fee. In 2014, my company processed 94 indigent reimbursement applications and we paid directly from us to the fund an amount of \$1,880.00 of our own money.
5. Because this fund has been so poorly managed, our reimbursements have been extremely unpredictable, ranging in 2014 from \$218.00 to \$650.00 and reimbursement aging reports show a range from 28 days to 153 days.

CLOSING

As you can see by this factual information, my company plays a huge role in this entire process of caring for Oregon's indigent decedents. We are proud to care for Oregon families as we do, but I'd appreciate having my concerns heard by this committee. I now realize there is opposition to this bill, however, please consider with high regard, the efforts of my company, my family, the many employees of our company, and mostly, the Oregon families that need us because they can't do it alone. Please ask yourselves, what are the motives of the opposition to this bill? I have openly communicated my company's role, but what is their stake in all this?

Most Sincerely,

Randy Tjaden, President
Cascade Funeral Directors, Inc.