

House Rules Committee
Rep. Williamson, Chair

From the Oregon Funeral Directors Association (OFDA)

Chair Williamson and members of the House Rules Committee:

For the record my name is Wally Ordeman, and I am a fifth generation funeral director from Albany and I represent the Oregon Funeral Directors Association as their contract lobbyist.

House Bill 4073 has come about because of a very real need to provide the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board with a tool to assist Oregonians when a cemetery has ceased to operate due to abandonment, bankruptcy, or disciplinary action.

In 2015, HB3242 made provisions for a “day pass” that allowed burials to take place in situations where cemetery property was owned, but burials couldn’t legally be accomplished due to these temporary closures. I’ve seen this system of temporary permits successfully work first hand, when a local Albany cemetery was temporarily closed due to disciplinary action.

The temporary burial permit has been a success. Those situations where Oregon’s citizens have needed a remedy are being resolved. Without this law, the situation becomes dire for families that would have to find a different means for burying their loved ones. That would mean burial in a different cemetery, cremating instead of burying, or temporarily housing a deceased person until the cemetery issues can be resolved. Those alternative options would create new financial burdens for families, emotional stress for grieving Oregon citizens, and the possibility that spouses might not be buried next to spouses or other family members even though they already own the cemetery plot.

The existing law sunsetted at the end of 2017. After a meeting of all relevant stakeholders, the group unanimously agreed that the original language and remedies of 3242 were solid, and that we could encourage the language of HB4073 to become permanent. And that the -1 amendment to remove the sunset clause be confirmed. It provides a level of protection for all Oregon communities, as well as those who have suffered a loss, and will ensure that our deceased citizens are cared for in a dignified manner.

The Oregon Funeral Directors Association brought this to the legislature in 2015, and bring it back to you in 2018 with the hope that you’ll make this legislation permanent.

Sincerely,
Wally Ordeman
OFDA Lobbyist

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