



KANSAS FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

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Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 2155
House Health and Human Services Committee
February 13, 2109

Chairwoman Landwehr and members of the Committee, my name is Pam Scott, Executive Director of the Kansas Funeral Directors Association (KFDA). The KFDA thanks you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of House Bill No. 2155. The KFDA's members include funeral homes, funeral directors and embalmers from across the state of Kansas.

Over the past few years, Kansas funeral directors have experienced increased delays by some coroners in completing the medical certification portion of death certificates. Delays cause hardship on the family of a deceased, not only emotionally but also financially. Families need a completed death certificate to file for insurance proceeds and survivor benefits and to take care of other affairs of the estate of the deceased.

Early last year Representative Eplee, a physician, convened a meeting to explore ways to address the situation. Present at the meeting were representatives of coroners, funeral directors and the Office of Vital statistics. After the meeting, the Office of Vital Statistics commissioned a study by National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) to study the medicolegal death investigation system in Kansas. The report was completed this fall. In our opinion, this legislation addresses the concerns raised in the NAME Report. The problem with the timely filing of death certificates is just a small part of the report.

The KFDA supports the establishment of the office of state medical examiner. It is our hope such an office would formulate regulations that would include standards as to what is considered a reasonable time to complete the medical certification portion of death certificates by coroners and establish possible penalties for a pattern of not completing death certificate in a timely manner.

We have a great working relationship with the Kansas Office of Vital Statistics and are confident they will use the position of state medical examiner to improve the coroner system in Kansas. Therefore we support this bill.

Thank you again the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to stand for any questions.