

Testimony – State Administration Committee – Sponsor Rep Bill Harris  
HB 529 “Generally revise laws governing crematoriums” 20 Feb 2013

Mr/Madam Chairperson  
Honorable members of this State Administration Committee

I rise in support of HB 529 asking to modify the laws governing crematoriums in our great state.

The Board of Funeral Services is directed by morticians bent on conflict with the independent crematories of our state in order to claim a greater monopoly of business by their incessant and frivolous charges laid to incapacitate good and healthy alternatives for the people of our state.

The body of my mother was cremated at the Central Montana Crematorium in Lewistown, and I have chosen that service after my death. I support this alternative to embalming.

I direct the Council of Aging in Lewistown and have long been involved in the work of supporting fair legislation for protect the choices of our citizens – especially our seniors, with regard to their final wishes. I know dozens of people who have made the choice to be cremated.

Lest we forget, we citizens of this state do not need any licensed funeral service as we are free to place the body of our loved ones in our own handmade casket and to bury that with our own hands on our own lands with proper notification of our local governments. We do not need a mortician to do these things for us, but we may choose that option. We should not be duped into believing that only the specially licensed are the sole purveyors of this task. The handling of our dead is a time honored responsibility. To wash the body, to place it in a box and to bury it has been our heritage.

The board of funeral oversight sought a few years ago to legislate absolute control of funerals in our state including the planning and execution of services by themselves – not by the customary work of our priests, rabbis, ministers, chiefs, shamans or family members. I testified against that at the time.

Please allow our crematoriums not operated by mortuaries to do the following: to receive our honored dead; to prepare the remains for cremation and to place the same in a cremation container; to simply remove pacemakers and the like from the dead body so as to not threaten the integrity of the machinery of cremation; and to perform the cremation without interference of another competitive person. This has been the work of our local crematorium but the funeral board and its leadership continues to seek monopoly in its divisive jealousy.

Please support equity in the current law that has 15 stated procedures for cremations and not one procedure outlining any of the states for the mortuary sciences (Title 37, Chapter 19). Thank you.



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