

**HB 223 (as amended)**

- If this bill does not pass, the BFS WILL DISCONTINUE VITAL RECORDS AND FUNERAL SERVICE RELATED INSPECTIONS
- Neither DPHHS or nor Counties do any vital records, death certificate or funeral service related oversight. The BFS disciplined 2 death certificate forgeries in 2015.
- There will be a SERIOUS VOID in vital record, consumer health and safety protection if this bill does not pass.
- Funeral licensees cannot continue shoulder ALL OF the burden for this oversight, in addition to shouldering licensing costs and funeral licensee oversight.
- The BFS is looking at a \$50,000 deficit in 2015 that will keep it from being able to even do basic licensing oversight if this bill does not pass. This deficit is with Board members declining stipends, limiting travel and meetings and reducing/eliminating all discretionary budgetary expenses.
- Licensing fees for BFS licensees are already significantly higher than surrounding states.

State	Mortician License Fee	Mortuary License Fee	Crematory Operator License Fee	Crematory License Fee	Total Fees
<b>Montana</b>	<b>\$375.00</b>	<b>\$375.00</b>	<b>\$300.00</b>	<b>\$375.00</b>	<b>\$1,425.00</b>
North Dakota	\$100.00	\$100.00	0	\$100.00	\$300.00
South Dakota	\$125.00	\$250.00	0	\$100.00	\$475.00
Wyoming	\$125.00	\$200.00	0	\$200.00	\$525.00
Idaho	\$85.00	\$125.00	0	\$200.00	\$410.00
Washington	\$135.00	\$295.00	0	\$210.00	\$640.00

- This bill, as amended, equalizes current DPHHS and County (\$3/\$3) first certified copy fees adding \$3 per copy for vital records oversight and public safety/health oversight by Board of Funeral Service (BFS). It also adds \$3 per additional copy to current fees for state and county levels.
- Consumer death certificate fee levels in Montana will remain approximately \$2 less than the national average for first certified copies (at \$15); \$5 less than the national average for additional certified copies (at \$6) at the county level; and \$3 less than national average at the state level (at \$8).
- Current National Average = First copy average \$16.82; additional copy average = \$12.01.
- Interested parties have weighted in: BILL WAS NOT OPPOSED BY ANY TESTIMONY IN GIVEN IN COMMITTEE HEARING.
- No matter your beliefs about taxes/fees, this bill is the ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF RETAINING VITAL RECORD AND FUNERAL SERVICE OVERSIGHT.
- Funeral professionals believe you want to keep your constituents and the people of Montana protected by keeping this oversight in place.
- YOUR LOCAL FUNERAL HOMES AND FUNERAL DIRECTORS GIVE A LOT AND DO NOT ASK FOR MUCH FROM YOUR COMMUNITIES, BUT THEY DO ASK THAT YOU:

**PLEASE VOTE YES ON HB 223.**

Thank you.

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