

Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, Inc.
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Written Testimony in SUPPORT
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**HB 5125 - An Act Concerning the Provision of Temporary Immunity from Liability to Entities
that have Safely Operated during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Judiciary Committee
Public Hearing
Monday, March 15, 2021

Good morning, Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Kissel, Representative Fishbein, and the distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Nicole Paquette, I am a licensed funeral director and the Legislative Co-Chair of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA), which represents approximately 220 funeral homes throughout the state.

Thank you for raising **HB 5125** "An Act Concerning the Provision of Temporary Immunity from Liability to Entities that have Safely Operated during the COVID-19 Pandemic" which seeks to protect certain entities from civil liability resulting from one's exposure to COVID-19. CFDA submits this testimony in SUPPORT of the proposed bill.

Providing temporary immunity from civil liabilities for certain entities, including funeral homes, is sensible and logical. The pandemic outbreak was caused by a new coronavirus (abbreviated as "COVID-19") that very easily spread from person to person. The risk of exposure warrants inherent responsibilities and prudent measures to be taken by a minimum of two parties, **and contingent upon all parties in a shared environment to uphold uncompromised compliance:**

1. An entity to provide, promote and sustain a safe environment- one void of gross negligence and willful misconduct.
2. One to navigate such entities' environment and conduct oneself in a safe manner.

Our funeral home member firms have and continue to safely operate to serve the communities in Connecticut through times of crisis and public health emergencies. Funeral directors and embalmers are cognizant of public health and their importance, the responsibilities for **their dedicated employees**, the care of decedents, and the families and friends who mourn them. Despite **upgraded cleaning of our facilities**, best practices, and mitigating and mandated measures (such as: wearing masks, social distancing, capacity limits, hand washing, etc.), this invisible foe, by nature, thrives upon easy transmission- with a brief time of exposure.

It is not a crime to laugh, sing, speak, cough, sneeze, yawn, or breathe-a necessary bodily function. These natural actions are scientifically accepted to produce respiratory droplets. By such means, an infection can transmit via airborne exposure, either from **a symptomatic or an unsuspecting asymptomatic** person. Resulting loss, damage, injury or death can and has already taken a devastating toll. Many of us look to the vaccinations available to finally eradicate our common viral enemy. However, there are still unknown days ahead and HB 5125 will provide a steady, beneficial hand to allow funeral home establishments to remain operational and continue to serve their communities during COVID-19.

The Connecticut Funeral Directors Association therefore supports HB5125 for the temporary immunity it prescribes. We thank you for your wisdom in raising the bill, and providing CFDA the opportunity to testify. I am available to answer questions now, or at a later date at the convenience of this distinguished committee.