



Re: Registration confirmation - Senate Business, Labor, & Technology 03/26/2024 02:00 PM (In Person)Megan Morgan to: LCS Committees 03/26/2024 02:21 PM

Oh my gosh I didn't realize this was in Denver I assumed it was Colorado Springs...

My name is Megan Morgan

My sister Amber Haines was killed on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. We took a couple of weeks to decide on a funeral home for her cremation and sad to say my mom and I picked Return to Nature because the website looked classier than the other places in our price range. My sister loved nature and the sentiment of the tree was sweet. I judged a book only by its cover and have now become a part of this horror story along with hundreds of other Colorado families. I was told in October that we had cement for ashes and my sisters body was found.

I remember my mom being adamant about choosing a place where she could watch my sister's body go into the cremation oven, we were unable to see my sister's body since she had been shot in the head so we wouldn't have been able to make sure anyways. Originally, we went to a place where we could do this but they gave my mom a hard time. I thought she was being ridiculous at the time and I was so wrong.

I will tell you as a victim I've had many nightmares, envisioning my sisters body with the giant hole in her head covered in maggots laying on top of other people. I drive by that building every day that I pick my son up from school. To think I passed my sister's body so many times in the 5 months she laid there in a pile of rotting victims.

The first thing I don't understand about how this could happen is if the Halford's were being sued by Wilbert crematory why on earth would the coroner not know about this and still send bodies there? There should've been more communication because at this point there were already multiple red flags that this place was shady. There should be more regulations to check funeral homes. I would understand this going unnoticed for a few months, maybe even a year but 4 years? 189 bodies? As soon as there was that lawsuit they should've been searched. There needs to be licensures and surprise inspections especially after what has happened so that grieving families can breathe a sigh of relief that this will not happen to them.

I am an advocate for the change funeral home laws and regulations so that no more families have to endure this nightmare. Honestly I feel extreme guilt for choosing Return to Nature like I failed my sister. She was treated like trash at her death and after. Amber was such a kind and beautiful person and deserves to be treated as such. Changing laws will keep monsters owning funeral homes

Thank you

On Fri, Mar 22, 2024 at 11:06 PM LCS Committees <[committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov](mailto:committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov)> wrote:

Thank you for registering to testify in person at the following hearing:

Committee: Senate Business, Labor, & Technology  
Date Time: 03/26/2024 02:00 PM  
Bill: SB24-173  
Room: Old Supreme Court  
Position on Bill: For

#### **Committee Information**

The committee chair determines the order of testimony and may limit the time allotted for public testimony. In most cases, testimony is limited to 2 to 3 minutes per witness. Witnesses may be called to testify at any point during the hearing as determined by the chair.

Hearings may be delayed or rescheduled. Please check the House and Senate calendars posted on the General Assembly's website for updates. For committee changes that occur the day of a committee hearing, please visit the Legislative Council committees Twitter feed, @COLCSCcommittees, for updates.

**You can track committee and floor action through this link:**

<https://www.leg.state.co.us/public/display.nsf/index.html>

For additional information on testifying before a committee of the Colorado General Assembly, please read the memorandum found [here](#). The regulations for remote testimony can be found [here](#).

Thank you

Colorado Legislative Council Staff

**Senate Business, Labor, & Technology**

**03/26/2024 02:00 PM**

**SB24-173 Regulate Mortuary Science Occupations**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Jessica Koerner Amend themselves	<p>Dear Senators,</p> <p>Thank you for your work in crafting the new bill (SB 24-173) to license funeral and mortuary science professionals. As a death doula who works with clients to craft end of life experiences and advocates for my clients, it's necessary to know that their end of life wishes will be fulfilled by licensed professionals.</p> <p>My concern with the wide-reaching definition of funeral director in this bill precludes families from working with services like mine, that can help them in their darkest moments. There is a difference between doulas, who are community deathcare professionals, and funeral directors. I worry that your definition, as stands, intrudes on a death doula's work educating families on their options for end of life, including disposition methods.</p> <p>Funeral directors have a very specific function. It should not preclude others from aiding and advocating for families. A funeral director should handle the direct disposition of a body. They should not be the sole arbiters of funerary celebrations.</p> <p>I draw your attention to two cases in California and Illinois that support my concern. They also should guide your revisions of this bill. In California, a court found that doulas are not the same as funeral homes/directors and should not be regulated as such (<a href="https://ij.org/press-release/victory-court-rules-california-regulations-on-end-of-life-doulas-violate-first-amendment-economic-liberty-rights/">https://ij.org/press-release/victory-court-rules-california-regulations-on-end-of-life-doulas-violate-first-amendment-economic-liberty-rights/</a>). In Indiana, a similar case is challenging the states funeral rules, rules that are similar to what you propose here. (<a href="https://ij.org/press-release/fort-wayne-death-doula-wins-first-round-of-lawsuit-can-keep-business-open-while-case-is-pending/">https://ij.org/press-release/fort-wayne-death-doula-wins-first-round-of-lawsuit-can-keep-business-open-while-case-is-pending/</a>)</p>

	<p>As this bill stands, you are condemning families to one type of deathcare, when previous law allowed for home funerals and memorials. I understand the anguish guiding the creation of this law, but we also have a death care crisis in this country. Care at the end of life, including aiding families in crisis, should not be regulated out of existence unless someone is a funeral director.</p> <p>Currently this bill goes too far in reaction to recent events. This bill also does not contain the teeth to prevent what happened. This is a good first draft that needs some friendly amendments to help dying Coloradans and their families know their disposition methods and memorials will be handled correctly. I am more than happy to discuss further the role of a doula and how it differs from a funeral director.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
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