

September 14th, 2023
To: Minnesota Representatives and Senators

Re: SF 2611
HF 2509

Dear Legislature Members:

I'm writing to express my support of the above-named bills currently under review in the MN Legislature. Funeral service continues to face workplace shortages, as do many other professions. However, similar to the shortage of healthcare workers, funeral service professionals face an enormous amount of compassion fatigue and workplace burnout. This bill would relieve some of the stress of both the staffing and wellbeing challenges.

As a MN-licensed mortician and former funeral service educator, I am proud of the education that our state requires in order to practice mortuary science. I must hold a license in order to make funeral arrangements with a family, embalm or otherwise care for the dead, and supervise a funeral or burial. Currently, I must also hold a license in order to transfer the dead from their place of death.

However, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, this licensure requirement was temporarily waived by MN-MDH, and unlicensed individuals were allowed to perform initial transfers (removals). Families continued to be cared for, and the dead continued to be respectfully attended to. This was a welcome reprieve in the heart of our collective distress and grief. And it served as a "beta test" of transfer care specialists.

I write with my support of this legislation in particular due to its requirement of training and education for transfer care specialists. It is incredibly important that at this tender and profound moment, the staff facilitating the transfer of the dead are trained on both practical aspects and ethical/compassion aspects. This bill addresses this critical facet of initial transfers.

I hope you will support this legislation in order to supplement the valuable and strenuous work of caring for the living and the dead. Your support will help us continue our sacred work.

Respectfully,

Angela Woosley, M.A.
Owner, Inspired Journeys
Board Member, National Home Funeral Alliance