

February 16, 2022

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

I am writing to you today in support of LD505, An Act to Update Reimbursement Rates for Transportation of Deceased Persons by Funeral Homes. My name is Idella P. Thompson Marquis and I have worked for Mockler Funeral Home in Caribou for nearly 14 years, including as a practitioner of funeral service since 2019.

This bill is to increase the reimbursement to funeral homes when transporting deceased individuals to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). From our funeral home to the OCME and back, it is 492 miles. Our funeral attendants need to leave between 3:30AM and 4:00AM to make it to the OCME for a 9:00AM start time. We are very fortunate that the OCME does their very best to schedule funeral homes travelling long distances in the morning so that the procedure can be finished by 12PM and our employee can get back on the road to Caribou – however this still puts them arriving back at the funeral home at 5:00PM. One trip to the medical examiner office ties up one staff person from 3:30AM until 5:00PM – and this is if everything goes perfectly to plan – a 13 and a half hour work day, plus 492 miles on a vehicle. If things do not go well, we sometimes have to stay overnight in a hotel to avoid sending someone back down the interstate the following day. With the increase in fuel, vehicle, meals, hotel, labor and equipment prices – it is easy to see how an increase in reimbursement is needed.

The work that is done at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is an asset to our state, and is widely underappreciated. This department is used by both citizens, and non-citizens who die in our state. We need to ensure that this department has what they need, and that we can all continue to transport to their facility. Increasing the reimbursement rates will aid in being able to ensure a timely arrival at the office of the Chief Medical Examiner by qualified transportation staff.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and considering this bill.

Respectfully,



Idella P. Thompson Marquis

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