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Liam Funte, MD, PhD
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn
Committee on Judiciary
132nd Maine Legislature

Re: LD 250

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the committee,

I am Lindsey Chasteen, the Office Administrator for the Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME). I am speaking today on LD 250, An Act Regarding the Disposal of Abandoned Human Remains. The current statute language states the OCME must store identified human remains for a total of 30 days before the remains are considered abandoned. To be considered abandoned, all efforts must be made to identify a next of kin and there is no next of kin found, or the next of kin has declined the responsibility of making final arrangements for the deceased.

The OCME, and funeral homes, have seen an increase in the number of abandoned bodies in the past several years. The OCME takes care of approximately 10 (ten) abandoned bodies each year.

LD 250 looks to lower the number of required storage days when the remains are in the custody of the OCME to 15 days. This is to align with the current statute language for human remains in the custody of funeral homes (Chap. 707 §2843(2)), and allow the OCME to move decedents along to final arrangements in a respectful amount of time.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lindsey Chasteen, MBA
Office Administrator