

Written Testimony before the State of Maine Legislature

LD 562 – An Act to Update Reimbursement Rates for Transportation of Deceased Persons by Funeral Homes When the Transport is at the Request of the Chief Medical Examiner

Position: Support

Testimony By

Idella P. Thompson Marquis, Funeral Practitioner

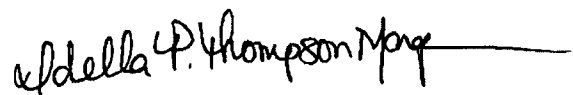
March 25, 2025

I am writing to you today in support of LD 562, 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 16 years, including as a practitioner since 2019.

This bill is to increase the reimbursement to funeral homes for 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 3:30 AM 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 traveling 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 at 5:00pm. One trip to the OCME ties up one staff person from 3:30AM until 5:00PM - 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 residents and non-residents who die in our state alike. We need to ensure that this department has what they need, and that we can all continue to assist them with transportation. 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 testimony and considering this bill.



Idella P. Thompson Marquis