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Testimony

In Support of Committee Bill No. 6060
An Act Concerning Disruption Of A Funeral

Judiciary Committee
March 19, 2007

Dear Senators McDonald and Kissel, Representatives Lawlor and O'Neill and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I very much regret that I am unable to appear at your public hearing today on this bill, however I am very pleased that your Committee took up our proposed bill and drafted it as this Committee bill and moved it forward for public hearing.

This topic was called to my attention by a constituent, Darien resident David Polett. Unfortunately Mr. Polett is out-of-state today and also cannot be present, but he had recounted to me incidents that had occurred at the funerals of veterans that I found shocking, repugnant and abhorrent, and hence the proposed bill that I had submitted.

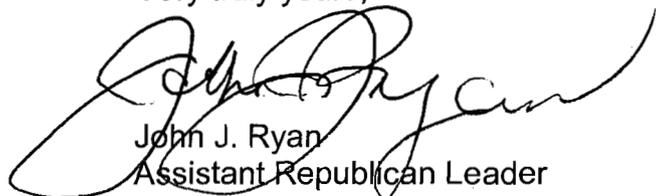
While Mr. Polett's concern (which I later learned was shared by Veteran's groups and others) was precipitated by incidents at funerals, I thought that there was no reason to limit the scope of this topic to veterans; rather than carve out an exception just for the funeral services of veterans, although they are an exceedingly worthy group, one can easily imagine that disruptive behavior could threaten a variety of funeral services, and it is not difficult to extrapolate some possible examples.

Please note that the topic of this proposed legislation should not be the subject of any concern over any constitutional issues. It is not the intent of the bill to interfere with anyone's constitutional rights of freedom of expression, rather the issue is a legitimate governmental interest in safety issues where a group of people concentrated at, and ingressing to and egressing from a restricted location, such as the situs of any funeral services, need the benefit of reasonable regulation of traffic and pedestrian flow to safely proceed to from and with the funeral services. Your Committee can quite properly make reasonable, non-restrictive provisions for the benefit of public safety and the safe passage of individuals to and from such an event as a funeral service. I am certain that

any research that our legislative staffs conducts will indicate that courts have found that reasonable regulation of activity in such a context is a proper governmental function.

Again, thank you for taking up this bill, and I urge you to move it forward.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and end.

John J. Ryan
Assistant Republican Leader