

Dear Senator/Representative:

Good morning.

As a CT licensed funeral director and funeral home owner as well as a member of the CT Board of Examiners for Funeral Directors and Embalmers (the State Board) I wish to address Proposed Bill No. 6061, "An Act Requiring Pedestrians And Operators Of Nonemergency Vehicles To Yield The Right Of Way To Funeral Processions"

The State of CT does not have any language addressing funeral processions. The content of this bill would allow for funerals to travel safely throughout the streets of the State of CT and at the same time have safety measures with regard to non participating vehicles in opposite lanes of travel at all intersections and stop signs.

Last summer, a next town police dept. called me after I conducted a funeral in that town to advise me that the cars in the procession need to stop at a stop sign individually even though participating in the funeral procession following the hearse or I and they would be cited for a moving violation the next time in his town! Another instance, a vehicle did continue through a red light traveling in a funeral procession. She too was violating the letter of the law and was subjected to a moving violation and received a citation. Unfortunately, for the officer, although maintaining the letter of the law and should have regarded the circumstances by the spirit of the law, the officer issued the citation to a mother of one of his own police department's officers.

Nevada is one state that specifically allows the lead or escort vehicle in a funeral procession to go through a red light. Five states grant funeral processions the right-of-way at intersections without any regard to traffic signals. Fifteen other states, properly identified vehicles in a funeral procession can disregard a red light and pass through the intersection if the lead vehicle lawfully went through the signal when it was green and subsequently changed to red.

Proper identification usually involves lighted head lamps, four way flashers and a clearly visible flag marked funeral or sign.

Eight other states also have laws relating to the continuity of funeral processions. All in all, a total of 50% of all states have language in statute addressing funeral processions and concerns for safety while maintain dignity and respect for the deceased and loved ones.

Thank you for your co-operation and concern of this long needed issue.

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Jowdy

Member, CT State Board of Funeral Directors and Embalmers