

February 20, 2013

Good afternoon Chairwoman Johnson and Chairwoman Gerratana and members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is John C. Carmon, President/ Funeral Director of Carmon Community Funeral Homes, Inc. based in Windsor with facilities in Granby, Hartford, Suffield, South Windsor, Poquonock, Rockville, Vernon, and Avon. I write to you in support of HB 5244—AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF CERTAIN BEVERAGES AND FOOD AT FUNERAL HOMES. Having served as president of the Connecticut FDA in the early 1990s and National FDA in 2000, I am intimately familiar with this issue and how food and beverage has been incorporated successfully into funeral service throughout almost every state. I can't think of another building in Connecticut where the owners can't offer their guests a cup of coffee, tea, or finger food. It almost seems unconstitutional to prohibit a practice that is not only culturally universal worldwide, but the essence of hospitality - something funeral service should be equated to. Further, many funeral homes today provide a wide array of community programs such as loss education for students, educational programs about end of life issues, symposia about veterans and other benefits for families, where serving snacks and beverage would be considered a normal practice anywhere else. In fact, I would bet the vast majority of our state residents can't believe this prohibition. Also, if a funeral service owner lives on the premises, they may serve food to their guest not in conjunction with a funeral and there is no prohibition to a family bringing in a Dunkin Donuts coffee and consuming it in a funeral home. We just can't give it to them.

Eight years ago we built a funeral home and separate family center in Avon, two separate buildings where we have successfully conducted receptions for families after services. It works extremely well, just like services in houses of worship that go to their fellowship hall. It serves a huge segment of our population that is not connected with a house of worship. There are cultures, now part of our communities, who want and need "comfort" food or at least the opportunity to care for people who have traveled a distance to attend calling hours or a funeral. This practice can be done properly, safely, and be a tremendous benefit to residents of our state. You are only allowing the worst experience of people's lives to be made more warm and comforting. I along with the Carmon family urge your passage of this legislation. It is embarrassing that you need to spend your time on something like this. Thank you.

John C. Carmon

## **CARMON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOMES**



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