

Committee on Public Health

CT State Legislature

Hartford, CT

March 13, 2014

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee,

Good morning, my name is Daniel P. Jowdy, I am Chairman of the CT Board of Examiners of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, an appointment made by the Governor and best known to many as the state board.

I submit testimony today from the sole governing board that oversees each and every funeral home (300) in the state.

The state board conducted a survey to all 300 licensed facilities to respond to the question of allowing or desiring food and/or nonalcoholic beverages be served in CT funeral homes. Of the 240 funeral homes that responded, 76% voted no. This result was also mirrored by the survey conducted by the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA) of its members.

The idea of serving food and nonalcoholic beverages in the funeral home will create many issues not even considered. Health Dept. issues,

Zoning issues, Liability issues, Certification issues, Proper Location issues and the issue of cornering another market and depriving the mom and pop restaurant an opportunity to engage in business for which they entitled to as part of the American dream.

Some funeral homes today believe that the consumers expect more from us. Yes they do! They expect more in professional services than anything else.

Serving food and beverage to the general public does not enhance that image. Providing a family making arrangements for a decedent an opportunity to have a nonalcoholic beverage and prepackage food item is the compromised limit to which the funeral directors of this state will not totally object to but in part.

The objection to allowing food and nonalcoholic beverages beyond this SB No. 434 would deprive the local businesses an opportunity to make a living.

In some instances, some funeral homes already provide families their definition of an opportunity to purchase flowers and monuments through them. The majority of funeral directors see it as an opportunity to increase their bottom line while taking business away from our local taxpaying businesses and your voting constituents.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel P. Jowdy, Chairman

