

Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, Inc.  
364 Silas Deane Highway  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
(860) 721-0234

Written Testimony  
Nicole Paquette, Co-Legislative Chair  
Connecticut Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

**HB 6480, An Act Concerning the Funeral Expenses of Certain Veterans**

Veterans' Affairs Committee  
Public Hearing  
Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Good afternoon, Senator Cabrera, Representative Boyd, Senator Cicarella, Representative Vail, and the distinguished members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. My name is Nicole Paquette, I am a licensed funeral director and the Legislative Co-Chair of the Connecticut Funeral Directors Association (CFDA), which represents 220 funeral homes. Thank you for raising House Bill 6480, An Act Concerning the Funeral Expenses of Certain Veterans.

CFDA submits this testimony in SUPPORT of the bill, the bill endeavors to clarify terminology related to funeral expenses for certain veterans who may be covered by the sum paid by the state.

As funeral directors, we prepare funeral service contracts, as such we recommend further useful clarification to the language and have submitted an amendment attached to this testimony to better define the meaning of "funeral expenses" in lines 44-46.

Funeral expenses include not only "funeral services" as stated in line 45. "Funeral expenses" also include other funeral merchandise and cash advance items as well. It is the sum total of the funeral services, funeral merchandise and cash advance items that constitute the "funeral expenses." Also, in lines 45-46, "the cost of burial or cremation" are generic and too broad of terms; "and the cost of publication of an obituary" is only one example of what is primarily a cash advance item. Besides an obituary, "funeral expenses" includes other cash advance items. These are amounts owed to third parties and are included as a courtesy on the "funeral expenses" bill to a purchaser.

Thank you for proposing HB 6480 which seeks to specify and clarify funeral expenses for certain veterans to receive a sum paid by the state. CFDA voices our support, particularly with inclusion of our clarifying language to address the vague terms regarding "funeral expenses."

CFDA thanks you for what you do and for your consideration. I make myself available to questions or comments.

Referred to Committee on VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Introduced by:  
(VA)

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE FUNERAL EXPENSES OF CERTAIN VETERANS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 27-118 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

(a) When any veteran dies, not having sufficient estate to pay the necessary expenses of the veteran's last sickness ~~[and burial]~~ and funeral expenses, as determined by the commissioner after consultation with the probate court for the district in which the veteran resided, the state shall pay the sum of one thousand eight hundred dollars toward such funeral expenses. ~~[, and the burial]~~

(b) Burial shall be in some cemetery or plot not used exclusively for the burial of the pauper dead. ~~[, and the same amount shall be paid if the body is cremated, but no]~~

(c) No amount shall be paid for ~~[the]~~ funeral expenses ~~[for burial or cremation]~~ unless claim therefor is made within one year from the date of death, except that in cases of death occurring abroad, such claim may be made within one year after the remains of such veteran have been interred in this country. No provision of this section shall prevent the payment of the sum ~~[above named for the burial of any person, otherwise entitled to the same,]~~ under subsection (a) of this section for funeral expenses on account of ~~[such]~~ the burial of such veteran being made outside the limits of this state.

(d) Upon satisfactory proof by the person who has paid or provided for the funeral [or burial expense] expenses to the commissioner of the identity of the deceased, the time and place of the deceased's death and burial and the approval thereof by the commissioner, [said] the sum [of one thousand eight hundred dollars] under subsection (a) of this section shall be paid by the Comptroller to the person who has paid the funeral [or burial expense or, upon assignment by such person, to the funeral director who has provided the funeral] expenses.

(e) Whenever the Comptroller has lawfully paid any sum toward the funeral expenses of [the burial of] any deceased veteran and it afterwards appears that the deceased left any estate, the Comptroller may present a claim on behalf of the state against the estate of such deceased veteran for the sum so paid, and the claim shall be a preferred claim against such estate and shall be paid to the Treasurer of the state. The commissioner, upon the advice of the Attorney General, may make application for administration upon the estate of any such deceased veteran if no other person authorized by law makes such application within sixty days after such payment has been made by the Comptroller.

(f) As used in this section, (1) "veteran" means any person [(1)] (A) honorably discharged from, or released under honorable conditions from active service in, the armed forces, as defined in section 27-103, or [(2)] (B) with a qualifying condition, as defined in said section, who has received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from active service in the armed forces; and (2) "funeral expenses" means the cost of funeral services, THE COST OF FUNERAL MERCHANDISE AND CASH ADVANCE ITEMS [the cost of] FOR burial, [or] cremation, OR OTHER DISPOSITION. "FUNERAL MERCHANDISE" SHALL INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, ALTERNATIVE CONTAINERS, CASKETS, URNS, VAULTS, AND OUTER BURIAL CONTAINERS. [and the cost of publication of an obituary.]

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2021	27-118

***Statement of Purpose:***

To specify the funeral expenses covered by the sum paid by the state for certain veterans.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*