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Written Testimony in OPPOSITION to Sec. 9
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SB 982 - An Act Revising Motor Vehicle Statutes
Transportation Committee
Public Hearing
Monday, March 8, 2021

Good afternoon, Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Carney, and the distinguished members of the Transportation 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 throughout the state. Thank you for your thoughtfulness in raising **SB 982** "An Act Revising Motor Vehicle Statutes" which seeks to grant the right-of-way to a funeral procession found under **Section 9**. Despite the good intentions of Section 9, CFDA submits this testimony in OPPOSITION.

Funeral Director's paramount concern of funeral processions is for the safety of the operators of motor vehicles, their passengers, and the public who encounter them. We believe that by requiring motor vehicle operators to obey existing traffic laws at all times provides for the greatest measure in preventing death, personal injury or property damage that may be suffered by any person(s) in a funeral procession, and to the public. Stemming from these safety concerns arises liability issues that may be imposed upon funeral directors, funeral homes, their employees or agents. Such liability issues would negatively impact these individuals and the solvencies of many Connecticut funeral homes.

Funeral processions proceed on roadways as a matter of courtesy extended by other motorists. Funeral home personnel promote the safe passage of processions with measures such as: instructional announcements, affixing "FUNERAL" signage or flags (in bright or contrasting colors) to vehicles, asking motorists to use lighted headlamps, hazard signals, and to proceed at reduced speeds. Should a police escort be necessary such a request in most cases, is readily accommodated. Still, CFDA further seeks avenues to create greater public awareness for funeral processions.

With the increase in cremation services, the easily recognizable hearse is not necessarily part of the funeral procession. Once engaged, and despite any number of the aforementioned safety measures employed, the procession still remains at the mercy of any imaginable external factors, hazards, driving behaviors (i.e. distracted, under the influence, etc.), and medical emergencies that face all motor vehicle operators today. Risks of death, personal injury or property damage

that result from a failure to grant the right-of-way are irreplaceable, or are too great of a loss for motorists, passengers, and the public to suffer. Such losses outweigh the deterrent of an infraction violation described in lines 282-283.

With these considerations, CFDA asks the Transportation Committee to please continue to allow motor vehicle operators to obey all traffic laws at all times by removing Section 9 of SB 982. Thank you for what you do. I make myself available to questions or comments at this time, or at the convenience of this committee.