

TESTIMONY ON HR1202

My name is Patricia Ward and I live in Boulder. First I want to say that I read all of your Bios. online and was very impressed and humbled by your breadth of experience and the depth of your commitment to community and service. Thank you so much for your good works and for taking the time to hear our views on Bill HR1202.

My experience with Natural Transitions happened when a dear friend of mine died in 2006 of cancer. She in the progression of her illness moved to a small assisted living home in Boulder. which was affiliated with Natural Transitions. Karen met with me and my friend's daughter to discuss care of the body. She spoke of filing the death certificate, final disposition of the body and maintenance of the body with dry ice prior to cremation, as well as, transportation of the body to a crematory. This was the first experience I had had with such a thing. I can remember being a little shocked. Thinking to myself "can you do that?" My friend passed. Karen assisted the family in filing the death certificate. She and my friend's daughter bathed and dressed the body. I bought dry ice each morning at the grocery store and took it to the home where I put it around and on the body as Karen had shown me to do. There was never any unpleasant smell or difficulty. We had a service in the home with family and friends. It was the sweetest and most gentle death experience I have had. On the third day we lifted my friend's body in blankets putting her in the back of my station wagon. I and my family, who rode in a separate car, took the body to the crematory in Denver. It was my last adventure with my friend whom I was always taking out during her illness. It was perfect. At the crematory the four of us said a prayer and the crematory put her body in the incinerator.

The cost of this was minimal. It cost my friend's daughter 300.00 which was the cost of cremation, as Natural Transitions donated their time. Neither my friend nor her daughter had much money and the family would not have been able to afford the six to ten thousand dollars a funeral home would have charged.

This bill is unclear but it appears that it will cause Natural Transitions, a 501 C 3, to register as a funeral home losing it's non-profit status, and cause Karen to register as a funeral director. It is a bill which does not include alternatives such as Natural Transitions but is slanted in favor of the funeral home industry. It is my experience that legislators are receiving the information on the home page of the Colorado Funeral Directors Association and basing their perspective on that alone.

Such a bill has been proposed in the legislature every year since 2006 when the Attorney General recommended its veto to Governor Owens. In 2007 a similar bill was killed in committee due to the Sunrise Review and subsequent recommendation of DORA. In 2008 a bill, which mirrors this year's bill except that last year they called the exact same requirements licensure and this year "title protection," was tabled indefinitely in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

I would request that before passing such a bill that you look at the history of proposed bills, the Sunrise Review of 2007, and the actual needs of the funeral industry in Colorado which might include allocations for such alternatives as Natural Transitions with a mind to consumer needs not just corporate needs.

Thank you so much for your attention to this matter and your continued good works,
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