

Testimony In Support of Legislation to Regulate Animal Crematory Businesses

My name is Jessica Benson, and I'm writing this because during one of the worst moments of my life, I was deceived.

Last year, my fur baby passed away. He wasn't "just a pet." He was my comfort, my companion, my baby. When he died, I made the deeply personal decision to have him cremated. I didn't want to put him out in the cold. I wanted him close to me.

I chose a business that advertised itself as a professional animal crematory. I trusted them with my baby's body.

What I later learned is that the person running that business was not performing cremations at all. Instead of my pet's ashes, I was given fake remains—rocks or debris. For years, multiple families were given the same thing.

While I was grieving, this person offered sympathy. He reassured me. He even tried to build rapport. All while knowing he had not honored my pet's body with the dignity I paid for and believed I was receiving.

I still do not know where my pet was taken. I still do not know what happened to him.

The pain of losing a pet is already overwhelming. To then discover you were lied to—that you held something in an urn believing it was your baby when it was not—is a second trauma.

There are currently not enough safeguards in place to regulate animal crematory businesses. Families assume there are standards, licensing requirements, inspections—but in many cases, there are not.

This bill is about protecting grieving families from exploitation. It's about ensuring licensing, oversight, inspections, and accountability. It's about preventing someone from profiting off heartbreak.

We regulate industries that handle human remains with seriousness and respect. Our pets are family. They deserve dignity. And the people who love them deserve honesty.

I can't change what happened to me. But you can help ensure it doesn't continue to happen to others.

Please support this legislation so no other family has to question whether the ashes they hold are really their beloved companion.