



Maryland State Funeral Directors Association, Inc.

2434 Morrcrest Drive, Corning, NY 14830

Phone: 410-553-7706

Email: msfda@msfda.net ▪ Web Site: www.msfda.net

February 13, 2026

Chairwoman Senator Pamela Beidle
Vice-Chairman Senator Antonio Hayes
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Proposed Senate Bill 510 – State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors – Funeral Direction Licensure and Apprentices – Requirements

Position: UNFAVORABLE

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Please find enclosed comments, thoughts, and suggestions on behalf of the Maryland State Funeral Directors Association, Inc. regarding **Senate Bill 510 – State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors – Funeral Direction Licensure and Apprentices – Requirements**.

While we believe the proposed bill is well intentioned, the proposed verbiage contained in Senate Bill is problematic for the profession and will unnecessarily expose the Marylanders and others unnecessary to risk of harm and/or injury. For the reasons stated herein, the Maryland Funeral Directors Association, Inc. is unable to support Senate Bill 510 and recommends an UNFAVORABLE report by the Senate Finance Committee. While the issues outlined herein are not intended to be an exhaustive list of concerns held by the Maryland State Funeral Directors Association, Inc., we have attempted to highlight the most significant areas of concern related to enacting Senate Bill 0510.

Please see our comments below:

ISSUE NO. 1

Issue No. 1: The preamble of Senate Bill 0510 states objectives for the bill that already exist in current, existing Maryland Law.

Proposed Section(s): Health Occupations 7-303(d)

DISCUSSION: The preamble of Senate Bill 0510 states that the promulgation of Senate Bill 0510 is *“for the purpose of...prohibiting the practical examination qualification required for a license to*

practice funeral direction from including a practical examination demonstrating competency in the preparation of dead human bodies for a certain purpose.” (Senate Bill 0510, 2026).

The current version of Health Occupations 7-303(c) clearly states:

(c) Competency in embalming. - For an individual applying for a license to practice funeral direction, the practical examination qualification under subsection (b)(5) of this section may not include demonstrating competency in embalming.

To be abundantly clear Health Occupations 7-303(b)(5) states:

(5) For an individual applying for a license to practice as a funeral director, passed the arts and sciences State board examinations, administered by the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards of the United States;

Consequently, when read together, Health Occupations 7-303(c) already prohibits the imposition of a requirement that an applicant for a Funeral Director’s license pass an examination that requires a demonstration of a competency in embalming. The proposed version of 7-303(d) attempts to expand the exemption of subjects a Funeral Director must demonstrate a competency to include testing applicants in the areas of preparation of Dead Human Bodies for Final Disposition and Sanitary Science. The Maryland State Funeral Directors Association, Inc. wholly disagrees with the attempt to expand such exemptions for the reasons stated in the following issues.

ISSUE NO. 2

Issue No. 2: Senate Bill 0510 attempts to remove the requirement of a mortuary science degree for a mortician’s license, and permits the issuance of a mortician’s license as long as the applicant has acquired any type of associate of arts degree and completed a course in mortuary science that is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education or approved by the Board. What are we communicating to the prospective applicant when we states they no longer have to obtain an educational degree in the subject matter they wish to engage in as a profession?

Proposed Section: Health Occupations 7-303(b)(3)(I) & 7-303(b)(3)(II)

DISCUSSION: Funeral Service is a profession. Funeral Service is a profession of educated individuals who have committed themselves to the lifelong service of others through the study of preservation of not only human remains, but also the preservation of the final memories of our mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and other loved ones. It is imperative that both morticians and funeral directors demonstrate not only a competency, but the lifelong educational commitment to understanding the science, business, and compassion the profession requires. For this very reason, funeral services professionals in Maryland are required to obtain 12 continuing educational units (CEUs) every 2 years to renew their license.

The commitment to education is imperative to protecting the licensed professional and the Maryland communities we serve. What are we telling applicant’s if they no longer have to obtain a degree in the subject matter of their profession to become licensed as a funeral service

professional? Would the legislature tell a doctor he or she does not have to have a degree in medicine? Would the Maryland legislature pass a law not requiring a lawyer to possess a degree in law? Why then would any legislative representative propose a bill to reduce the requirement to have a professional educational degree in mortuary science for the funeral profession?

Funeral service professionals are exposed to some of the most harmful chemicals to prevent the unnecessary exposure of the public and the professional to communicable diseases. Licensed funeral professionals must have the mandatory education and training to handle human remains that possess these communicable diseases and/or have been injected with chemicals to prevent exposure and injury to themselves and the communities that they serve. Reducing the educational requirement for a licensed funeral director to merely having “*completed a course in mortuary science*” is extremely unwise.

To require only one (1) course in Mortuary Science for the issuance of a license as a Mortician or Funeral Director is unfathomable. The proposed amendment to Health Occupations 7-303 must have been drafted in error. Stating that a mortician or a funeral director must have “*completed a course in mortuary science*” is misleading if that was not the intent of the bill. Use of such words “coursework in mortuary science” or “curriculum in mortuary science” would be more appropriate.

ISSUE NO. 3

Issue No. 3: At a minimum, Health Occupations 7-303(C) and 7-303(D) should clearly state that a funeral director must possess a requisite knowledge of the science to prevent the spread of communicable diseases through the preparation of dead human bodies for final disposition and sanitary science. The verbiage of Health Occupations 7-303(C) & (D)(1) regarding the coursework required for an applicant for a funeral director license in Maryland is not sufficiently specific, allows too much room for interpretation, could lead to harmful results for the funeral professional and the Maryland Consumer.

Proposed Section: Health Occupations 7-303(b)(3)(II)(2), 7-303(C) & 7-303(D)

DISCUSSION: Health Occupations 7-303(C)(1) explains the course work needed to obtain a funeral director license. It states in pertinent part:

SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, AN ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(3)(II)1B OF THIS SECTION MUST INCLUDE A MINIMUM OF 60 CREDIT HOURS OR THE EQUIVALENT OF CREDIT HOURS IN COURSES RELEVANT TO THE PRACTICE OF A FUNERAL DIRECTOR;

The use of the phrase “*Relevant to the Practice of A Funeral Director*” allows for interpretation of what is relevant and what is not relevant. Since funeral directors do not embalm and have not been required to perform an embalming during the practical examination, one could argue that embalming, preparation of deceased human bodies, and sanitation are not relevant and do not

have to be required courses. The public health risks previously identified necessitate that an applicant in for the funeral director license must possess a requisite knowledge of the science to prevent the spread of communicable diseases through the preparation of dead human bodies for final disposition and sanitary science. The statute should state the minimum educational requirements to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

ISSUE NO. 4

Issue No. 4: The National Board Exam administered by the Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards of the United States contains questions on embalming, preparation of human remains for disposition, and funeral service sciences.

Proposed Section: Health Occupations 7-303(b)(3)(II)(2), 7-303(C) & 7-303(D)

DISCUSSION:

The proposed amendments to Health Occupations 7-303(b)(3)(II)(2) requires that an applicant for funeral director's license pass the "*National Board Examination administered by the Conferences of Funeral Service Examining Boards of the United States*" (see Health Occupations 7-303(b)(3)(II)(2)). According to the International Conferences of Funeral Service Examining Boards' website:

The National Board Exam consists of two sections: Arts Section covers funeral service arts including restorative art, embalming theory, and funeral directing. Sciences Section covers mortuary sciences including pathology, microbiology, and anatomy. Both sections are computer-based and administered at Pearson test centers.

[\(<https://theconferenceonline.org/faq/#national-board-exam>\)](https://theconferenceonline.org/faq/#national-board-exam)

In order for applicants for a funeral director license to be successful on the National Board Exam (NBE), applicants must possess a knowledge of embalming theory, preparation of human remains, and funeral service sciences because there are science-related questions on the arts-exam and art-related questions on the sciences exam. According to the International Conferences of Funeral Service Examining Boards' website:

When you take the National Board Exam, you may notice questions in the Arts section that reference science-related topics or vice versa. The jobs of funeral directors and embalmers are related, and therefore, the two exams will be related to some extent. However, every question on the Arts exam is tied to a section of the Arts exam blueprint, while every Sciences question is tied to the Sciences exam blueprint. This blueprint can be found in the NBE Study Guides. In addition to the blueprint, questions are also tied to a book listed in the Help Resources list (also located in the NBE Study Guides) and the ABFSE Curriculum Outline.

Removing the practical examination for, and possibly the educational requirement for, competency in the preparation of dead human bodies for final disposition and sanitary science in the proposed verbiage of Health Occupations 7-303(D) will not only lead to unnecessarily

exposing funeral directors and the Maryland communities to an unnecessary risk of harm, but it will also surely lead to unsuccessful attempts to pass the National Board Exam by the applicant. Professionals must be fully trained in the field they wish to practice. At a minimum, they must possess the knowledge required to protect themselves, protect the Maryland communities they serve, and pass the licensing exam.

ISSUE NO. 5

Issue No. 5: Even though Health Occupations 7-303(C) does not currently require a demonstration of competency in the preparation of dead human bodies for final disposition and sanitary science, it should.

Proposed Section: Health Occupations 7-303(D)

DISCUSSION: While Health Occupations 7-303(C) does not include demonstrating a competency in embalming, applicants for licensure as a funeral director should be able to demonstrate best practices for preparation of human dead bodies for final disposition and Sanitary Science. More importantly licensed funeral directors should be knowledgeable in all aspects of funeral service. This bill was designed to fast track the issuance of funeral directors licenses in order to fulfill the shortage of funeral service licensees. However, it is extremely unwise to lessen the educational requirements at the risk of exposure to harm to the public.

Licensed funeral directors will still have to wash and disinfect human remains as part of their preparation process. Morticians and funeral directors should both be tested on knowledge and understanding of the sanitation procedures necessary to prepare human bodies for final disposition.

For the aforementioned reasons, the Maryland State Funeral Directors Association Inc. respectfully requests the Senate Finance Committee strongly weigh our comments in the light of what is best served to protect the profession, the Maryland Communities we serve, and the memories of our loved ones who have passed away. We request the Senate Finance Committee issue an UNFAVORABLE report.

Our recommendations are not only what we believe to be good for the consumer, but best for the industry as a whole. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues raised herein. Please feel free to contact me at (410) 435-4529 or via email at nathanmalloyesq@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Walter Nathan Malloy Jr., Esq.
Attorney for MSFDA, Inc.

cc: Earl Canapp

MSFDA Comments on Senate Bill 0510 (2026)

Senate Finance Committee

February 13, 2026

Ed Lassahn

Dan Simons

Jack Mitchell IV