

# Senate Judiciary Committee

*Brendan Bunnell 271-4063*

**SB 410**, relative to possession of human remains for law enforcement training purposes.

**Hearing Date:** January 13, 2026

**Time Opened:** 1:15 p.m.

**Time Closed:** 1:22 p.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Gannon, Abbas and Reardon

**Members of the Committee Absent :** Senators Carson and Altschiller

**Bill Analysis:** This bill authorizes law enforcement to possess human remains, upon written consent, for the purpose of training cadaver dogs.

This bill is a request of the department of safety.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Gannon

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Innis

Sen. Birdsell

Sen. Lang

Sen. Avar

Sen. McGough

Sen. Murphy

Sen. Pearl

Rep. Bernardy

Rep. Porcelli

Rep. L. Miner

Rep. M. Pearson

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator Bill Gannon, Lieutenant Christopher Storm, Colonel Kevin Jordan (NHFG), Julie Thibault (NHFDA), David Bryant (NHFDA), Amy Michael, Senator Tim McGough, Senator Daniel Innis, Senator Howard Pearl, Senator Tim McGough, and Senator Cindy Rosenwald

**Who opposes the bill:** Daniel Richardson

**Who is neutral on the bill:** None.

**Summary of the testimony presented :**

**Senator Gannon (SD-23)**, explained that the bill was a request of the Department of Safety. Stated that the purpose of the bill was to establish a lawful and ethical framework for law enforcement agencies to possess portions of human remains for cadaver training.

- Explained that current law lacked clear authorization for this practice. Stakeholders including law enforcement, funeral homes, and academic institutions collaborated to develop best practices.
- Said that the bill fills a long-standing gap in New Hampshire law, protected public safety, respected the deceased and their families, and provided law enforcement with ethical tools to serve the community.

**Lieutenant Chris Storm**, a member of the New Hampshire State Police speaking in support of Senate Bill 410, stated that the bill established a lawful and ethical framework for law enforcement agencies to possess human remains for cadaver dog training. Explained that New Hampshire law currently had no provision allowing this practice. Stated that the legislation ensured dignity, transparency, and accountability.

- Explained that cadaver canines were critical for locating missing persons and recovering evidence, and that effective training required access to human remains. Only Wyoming and Montana currently allowed this practice. Stated that New Hampshire had worked for many years to establish a clear legal framework.
- Stated that the bill includes safeguards such as written consent from next of kin or from the individual prior to death, oversight by credentialed professionals, and compliance with health and safety regulations. Added that the bill requires comprehensive policies, chain-of-custody documentation, and responsible final disposition through licensed providers.
- Testified that stakeholders including law enforcement, funeral professionals, and academic institutions supported the bill. Emphasized that the bill protected public safety while respecting the deceased and their families.
- Noted that UNH's Department of Anthropology supported the bill and had provided a letter outlining their assistance.

**Julie Thibault**, President of the New Hampshire Funeral Directors Association, stated that the association supported Senate Bill 410. Explained that the association had worked closely with the New Hampshire State Police to ensure the process would be handled in a dignified and respectful manner. Stated that the process mirrored voluntary anatomical donor programs that funeral directors had worked with for years. Expressed confidence in the process.

- Stated that funeral directors support the bill because of the importance of returning missing human remains to families. Clarified that while funeral directors did not view grief as something that fully closes, returning remains was an important part of helping families move through the grief process.

**David Bryant**, a funeral director from Berlin and President-Elect of the New Hampshire Funeral Directors Association. Stated that one key difference in the bill compared to other states was that it limited participation to accredited law enforcement agencies and excluded nonprofits or other entities. Stated that this limitation addressed major concerns of the association. Noted that the association remained available to assist any accredited agency that wished to participate.

BMB

Date Hearing Report completed: January 14, 2026