

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Ben Mickens 271-1403

HB 1119, relative to the regulation of funeral directors.

Hearing Date: March 4, 2026

Time Opened: 9:23 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:31 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Pearl, McGough, Gannon and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Altschiller

Bill Analysis: This bill creates a state licensing process for the position of associate funeral director.

Sponsors:

Rep. Rhodes

Rep. Roy

Rep. Wheeler

Sen. Pearl

Who supports the bill: Senator Howard Pearl, Representative Jennifer Rhodes, Julie Thibault (NH Funeral Director Assoc.) and Cory Stone.

Who opposes the bill: No one.

Who is neutral on the bill: Director Deanna Jurius (OPLC)

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Jennifer Rhodes:

- Representative Rhodes stated that this bill was at the request of the Funeral Director Association to address the amount of embalming that an associate is required to perform before becoming a director.
- Representative Rhodes told the committee that New Hampshire has the highest rate of deceased being cremated, which has implications for funeral director professionally.

Julia Thibault, NH Funeral Directors Association

- Ms. Thibault explained that Funeral Directors are headed to a provider crisis.
- Ms. Thibault explained that families are asking funeral directors to organize many different celebratory events that does not include embalming.
- She stated that the current workforce of funeral directors is nearing retirement and that there are not enough new directors coming through the door.
- Ms. Thibault explained that apprenticeship programs in New Hampshire are seeing an increase in dropout from apprentices.
- Ms. Thibault stated that funeral directors used to be born into the job and took over a family business, but this has become an exception not the rule.
- She explained that the current law states funeral directors have to be embalmers which results in the expectation of applicants that they will be performing restorative work. She added that when they find that this is not the case, they often seek work elsewhere.
- She stated that this bill would add a Funeral Director Associate license that would allow individuals to perform all funeral director services except embalming.
- Ms. Thibault explained that the statute would still require education and training related to the position of funeral director allowing highly qualified individuals to enter the field. She added that embalming is still a valued practice by many families and would not be eliminated under this legislation.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.

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Date Hearing Report completed: March 6, 2026