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Testimony Concerning House Bill 2262
House Health and Human Services Committee

February 6, 2023

Chairwoman Landwehr and Members of the Committee, I am Pam Scott, Executive Director of the Kansas Funeral Directors Association (KFDA). The KFDA appreciates the opportunity to appear before you today in support of House Bill 2262, which was introduced at our request.

Currently to obtain licensure as an embalmer in Kansas an applicant must serve a 12-month apprenticeship under the supervision of a licensed embalmer after completing mortuary science school and passing a national board examination (NBE) which is administered by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards. House Bill 2262 would provide an applicant for a Kansas embalmers license the option to serve a split apprenticeship. In a split apprenticeship, the first six-months of the apprenticeship could be served prior to attending mortuary science school with the remaining six-months served after graduation from mortuary science school and passage of the NBE. Nebraska has a similar apprenticeship law. The bill would require the first six-months of the apprenticeship to be served under the direct personal supervision of a licensed embalmer. The second six-months would be served under the personal supervision of a licensed embalmer.

Kansas, like other states, is experiencing a shortage of licensed embalmers. Providing a split apprenticeship would be beneficial for those interested in entering the profession. It could shorten the time it takes for an applicant to become licensed and weed out applicants that later determine an embalming profession is not for them.

Oftentimes potential embalmers will attend mortuary science school without any practical experience in a funeral home. They find the profession intriguing, enjoy science, but have never had the opportunity to work with or around dead human bodies much less embalm them. There are instances where once they do get that opportunity, they realize the profession is not for them. In such instances they have paid tuition and spent a year of their life going to school for a profession they later determine they do not want to continue in.

This legislation could shorten the length of time it takes to obtain a degree. To obtain an embalmers license, an applicant must complete 60 semester hours of college courses which includes graduating with an Associate degree in

mortuary science. There is one school in Kansas that offers a mortuary science degree, Kansas City Kansas Community College. Mortuary science school is generally a 12-month course of study. If six-months of the apprenticeship could be served prior to mortuary science school, the apprentice could also use that time to complete a portion of the 30 hours of the preliminary college credits required to enter mortuary science school and receive their degree thus shortening the time it takes to become licensed.

The KFDA believes this change in the law would make it easier to attract potential quality embalming students and future embalmers to Kansas. We urge you to support House Bill 2262.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you might have.