



Protecting a consumer's right to choose meaningful, dignified, and affordable funerals since 1963

January 29, 2015

To the Honorable Members of the House Committee on General, Housing, and Military Affairs
Rep. Helen Head, Chair
Rep. Tom Stevens, Vice Chair
Rep. Brian K. Savage, Ranking Member
Rep. Diana Gonzalez
Rep. Gabrielle Lucke, Clerk
Rep. Mary A. Morrissey
Rep. Job Tate
Rep. Tommy Walz
and Rep. Mike Yantachka

Support for House Bill 25, Natural Burial Grounds

Funeral Consumers Alliance, a national nonprofit consumer education organization based in Vermont, gladly supports this bill that makes natural burial grounds possible in our state. The public is increasingly interested in alternatives to the costly and resource-intensive “traditional” funeral practices common in the United States. Natural or “green burial,” interment without embalming, concrete vaults, metal caskets, and manufactured markers, is really a return to what our very recent ancestors called simply, “burial.”

As a former flatlander who has adopted Vermont as my home, I was surprised to find that antiquated cemetery statutes have stood in the way of burial grounds that are, pun intended, a “natural” for our state. The beauty of our natural landscape and the vigor with which the legislature and policy makers safeguard the health of our environment add significantly to our quality of life.

People’s preferences for burial and funeral customs are changing. The idea of burial in a natural or wilderness area free of the regimented nature of conventional cemeteries has appeal for many people. I hope to see swift passage of this bill and I offer Funeral Consumers Alliance’s help in any way legislators may request.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua L. Slocum".

Joshua L. Slocum
Executive Director