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JEFF PITTMAN
41ST DISTRICT

Feb 17, 2020

Chairman Proehl and to the rest of the House Transportation committee--

I introduced HB2608 after attending my Uncle's funeral. He was interred into a National Cemetery with honors, having served in Vietnam and many years of service.

As part of his funeral, we were in a procession from the funeral home to the cemetery as is normal. We had the benefit during the funeral procession of having former military escorts, in this case a group known as the Patriot Guard motorcycle riders. They conducted themselves professionally and truly aided the procession by managing some of the traffic so the procession could maintain its integrity and give due honors to the fallen veteran.

As a part of this committee, I looked into whether these escorts would have protections if they were to have an accident as part of the procession. I was surprised that thirty states have statutes related to and recognizing funeral processions. Kansas does not.

In other words, processions commonly have to ignore traffic stop signs and sometimes the procession goes through stop lights. If a car were to hit one of these escort volunteers, or any vehicle for that matter, the vehicles in the procession could be at fault just because they were technically breaking the law...all because the law does not currently recognize funeral processions in statute.

Death is a fact of life for all of us. I'm sure we all have participated in funeral processions. They are a fact of life and they will continue. We should do something to formally put protections in place. I urge you to vote yes and pass HB2608 out of committee after due consideration. This is merely about putting something in our statutes that at a minimum recognizes that, when properly marked, a funeral procession has right of way privileges. I believe we should also allow cities and counties to make further restrictions, but at least this will help protect our citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Rep Jeff Pittman

Leavenworth, KS HD #41