



Newcomer
Funeral Service Group
Excellence. Trust. Care. Growth.

February 2, 2021

Sen. Carolyn McGinn
Chair of the Local Government Committee
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th St., Room 223-E
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Madam Chair and Committee Members,

My name is John Newcomer and I'm a licensed funeral director in the State of Kansas. I wish to share my strong opposition to Senate Bill No. 97. I grew up in Topeka, graduated from the University of Kansas, and currently live in Lawrence. After practicing as a CPA for 4 years, I joined my family's business and now represent the fifth generation of my family's commitment to providing cemetery and funeral services.

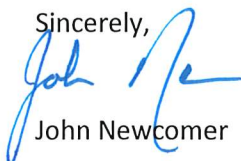
I am here to provide a voice for those who no longer have their own voice, and to protect those who can't protect themselves. I represent the countless people interred in cemeteries across Kansas, who purchased property with the intention of having a peaceful resting place without interference from commercial enterprise.

My family owns two cemeteries in Kansas. Mount Hope Cemetery and Mausoleum and Memorial Park Cemetery and Mausoleum are iconic fixtures in Topeka and part of the landscape of our community. Family members visit their loved ones and members of our community often take long walks through the grounds. This is true in every community throughout the State of Kansas.

Cemeteries serve as peaceful memorials honoring family, friends and neighbors who have gone before us, and the final resting place for community members still with us today. I have personally met with hundreds of families and have a deep understanding of how important peace and tranquility are when choosing cemetery space. They are also assured that the cemetery will remain a cemetery in perpetuity. To retroactively disrupt a sacred environment for the purpose of commercial gain would be a great disservice to the residents of our community and our State.

I urge you to carefully consider this bill. While the addition of the definition of "sepulture" may seem innocent enough, imagine the unintended consequences its passage could cause. If this bill was to become law, it will open a back door for any municipality or commercial business to challenge land dedication laws. Public parks, roadways and easements all over the state could be at risk of commercial development for the sake of corporate gain. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



John Newcomer