

From: Whitney Moulden whitthad@hotmail.com
Subject: Proponent Testimony from Whitney Davis Moulden on SB131
Date: February 23, 2021 at 12:55 AM
To: florence.deeter@senate.ks.gov
Cc: Jeff Pittman jeff@votepittman.com, Whitney D. Moulden whitthad@hotmail.com



Proponent Testimony from Whitney Davis Moulden on SB131

Whitney Davis Moulden
1100 Third Avenue Apt 7
Leavenworth, KS 66048
February 22, 2021

Senate Transportation Committee: Today I am here to support SB131. Mark McKinnon, Advisor and Activist, once said "If we cannot come together to pause, to respect our dead and the heroic lives of meaning they led, then ours is truly a civilization lost." This bill will formally recognize organized funeral processions in Kansas. I am the sixth generation of a family owned funeral home in Leavenworth, Kansas. I am also a licensed funeral director. From the nineteenth century horse and carriage to the twenty-first century Fleetwood hearse, the funeral procession has long been the last opportunity to pay your final respects to the deceased, known or unknown, and to acknowledge the deceased, while they are driven on their final rite of passage. Today, more often than not, I have witnessed people disregard this custom. The purpose of this bill is to require people to pull over and yield the right of way for a funeral procession, or risk being fined.

Currently, in this time of pandemic with an increased amount of deaths, most funeral homes are driving more processions to the cemetery unescorted. The local police are either unable or unwilling to provide for an escort for the most well known to the most humble of our local citizens. There is no professional escort service and our own drivers try to navigate the planned route to the cemetery, hoping that people will be aware and respectful enough to pull over for the time it takes the procession to pass. We currently have to rely on the common sense and decency of other drivers to notice the flow of cars with headlights on, flags, yellow lights flashing, and magnetic funeral signs on the vehicles. To enhance and protect the safety of drivers, families, and staff we need common decency shown in such ways as to stop at green lights, not turn into the traffic flow, or otherwise disrupt the procession. While one would think of this as an automatic behavior from a civilized society that is no longer the case.

The additional escorts that are provided by the Patriot Guard Riders, at their own time and expense, have also had trouble with cars not pulling over and not stopping. This can become a safety risk for the riders. The Patriot Guard have relayed stories of near crashes and potential sideswipes from the other drivers while they are escorting on their own authority. Ideally we would live in a society where paying final respects to the deceased was expected and not even questioned, but alas we do not. That is why we have come today to request you review this situation. First-It is the right thing to do, second-if people cannot be expected to follow these guidelines willingly then a fine or ticket should be issued, and third-by expecting the drivers to stop, keeping our Guards, Clients, Families and Staff Members safer and more assured of being protected while they are doing the right thing. Remember-you too will be taking your last ride one day and wouldn't you want the people in your procession to be safe and protected as they escorted you to the grave. This bill, SB131, is two-fold in respecting the dignity of the deceased and insuring the safety of the living.

Thank you for your time,
Respectfully, Whitney Davis Moulden, LMAC, LFD, LCO