

Position Statement

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Texas (FCAT) position is to sunset the Texas Funeral Service Commission and move its administrative functions to the Texas Licensing and Regulation Board for a net savings believed to be in excess of \$500,000 per year. Negative consumer impact is not anticipated; in fact we believe consumers will benefit from the elimination of the TFSC.

If the Sunset Commission decision is to continue the TFSC, FCAT supports all four of Sunset Staff's issues with the TFSC, but with an additional demand to increase public support and education on the TFSC website.

The TFSC website has only one page for consumers, and does not mention available choices of body disposition beyond typical retail funeral goods and services. It does not mention that families can do all of the disposition duties themselves without using a licensed funeral retailer, although their own printed-on-paper consumer brochure states it clearly in the first paragraph. There is nothing on the agency webpage about green burial or home funeral, two choices that are being made by families in Texas and the U.S.

FCAT volunteers communicate almost every day with consumers, and know that there are times that licensed funeral professionals make mistakes and actively cause harm, but for the most part they do a good job and run a fair business. But it is an **optional choice** that the American public, and even funeral professionals, accept as the only process available. But when retail funeral goods and services are decompiled to their factual functions, it is nothing more than event planning and everyday logistics. There is no basis to what they do that requires special skills except embalming; and embalming is not required anywhere in this country (nor will it ever be because the Muslim and Jewish faiths do not allow embalming). So the State of Texas is segregating a closed set of event planning, and regulating it with a special set of rules that can be eliminated, thus allowing everyday business and commerce law protect families from unfair trade and contractual events rather than an arcane complaint process within the TFSC. TLRB could regulate the tiny remaining regulations related to embalming; something now proven not necessary to protect public health (thus no need to require and inspect embalming rooms). **See page 3 for event planning breakout of a standardized goods and services invoice.**

Page 4 shows how simple it is to care for a dead body without embalming. Most of the world outside the U.S. does it everyday without "making the news". **Page 5** shows green burial in Texas, something happening on an almost weekly basis now. What green burial and simple body chilling techniques do is bring family and friends together for disposition in a helpful and caring way. Making the choice to do-it-yourself, rather than choosing professional retailers, is inherently a more healthy way to process death. **Death is the ultimate separation, but retail funeral professionals separate us even more from our loved one.** They inadvertently confess to the harm by consistently using the term they learn in mortuary school of "taking your loved one into our care"; an effective marketing term, yet clearly stating that they are going to "care" for your loved one when it would be spiritually and psychologically more comforting to care for your loved one yourself.

Page 5 is a quick view of green burial (no embalming, steel coffin, concrete liner, etc.) that is bio-friendly and much less expensive to perform. Green burial is more comforting and naturally effective at processing the separation and emotions of grief by gathering friends and family to dispose of the body in the way it's been done for thousands of years.

Please sunset the Texas Funeral Service Commission and move its function to the TLRB so that the retail funeral business does not have a citadel of bureaucracy protecting its bottom line from the natural instincts of families to care for their own dead.