

Testimony on SB 2139

Thank you Madame Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Human Services Committee.

My name is Senator Dean Rummel, from District 37

This bill deals with the final disposition of individuals within the state who are indigent. It will provide for a standardized indigent burial authorization method and application across all zones of the Department of Human Services. It requires final disposition to take place within 7 days. The reimbursement for an indigent final disposition will be \$3,500, which is slightly below the statewide average of cremation without services.

Previously the reimbursement for an indigent disposition varied across the state because it was negotiated by each Department of Human Services zone with interested funeral directors. I have been informed that the number of indigent dispositions was 305 this past year.

In the absence of next of kin, authorization for an indigent final disposition needs to be provided to the funeral director from the Department of Human Service Zone Director and the County Coroner.

Throughout the bill FINAL DISPOSITION replaces BURIAL. This change is needed because the rate of cremation in

North Dakota has increased from 8% in 1995 to nearly 60% in 2022. So, in this bill, those eligible for indigent final disposition assistance will be cremated.

Madame Chairman and members of the committee I would ask for your support on Senate Bill 2139 and I stand for any questions.