



CALISTA CORPORATION
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February 20, 2014

Senator Donny Olson
Alaska State Capitol
Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Rep. Bob Herron
Alaska State Capitol
Room 411
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB161 & HB301 - Medical Examiner Death Certificates

Dear Senator Olson and Representative Herron:

Calista Corporation supports SB161 and HB301 clarifying the State of Alaska medical Examiner Office responsibilities on return of an individual's remains post mortem to the families in rural Alaska. Thank you for your initiative, support, and effort on this important policy issue.

Our rural citizens' face extraordinarily high living costs due to lack of infrastructure and energy options without the added burden of unnecessary expenses associated with a family members' untimely death. These same families are also some of the poorest in Alaska. Currently, the state pays to have remains returned to place of death once an autopsy has been completed by the State Medical Examiner who is located only in Anchorage. This legislation will clarify options and steps involved in the "Authorization for Release of Remains" form (Form) to the next of kin, and that they are not left with huge funeral home expenses which they cannot afford and often do not realize they have a choice in. The legislation will:

1. Clarify wording on the "Authorization of Release of Remains" form to ensure it provides the cheapest most simple option first and does not utilize language which may "lead" preferentially to the more costly funeral home embalming, dressing, or casket choice option(s) first but rather as second choice options for grieving families,
2. Clearly identify on "the form" that the remains Transportation cost and Transit Permit for the remains falls on the state medical examiner office when a basic option to return to place of death or family home for simple burial is chosen,
3. Identify that it is the families option and choice to select a funeral home for embalming, dressing, casketing, or cremation if they so choose, and, furthermore that a funeral home is not required by state law.

A clearly worded Form in simple English which was reviewed by legislative legal is attached. We are happy to provide a briefing, discuss cost impacts to rural citizens' limited disposal income, and testify on this important sensitive matter. Thank you for your continued service.

Sincerely,

CALISTA CORPORATION



Andrew Guy
President & CEO