

SUBJECT: Revising retail price lists of funeral establishments

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Kolkhorst, Naishtat, Alvarado, Coleman, S. Davis,
V. Gonzales, S. King, Schwertner, Truitt, Zerwas

0 nays

1 absent — Laubenberg

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, March 28 — 31-0

WITNESSES: (*On House companion, HB 1349:*)
For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jim Bates, Funeral Consumers Alliance; Amanda Fredriksen, AARP)

Against — None

On — Chet Robbins, Texas Funeral Service Commission

BACKGROUND: Under Occupations Code, sec. 651.405, funeral establishments must furnish a retail price list containing the prices of its items or services, including the prices of transferring the deceased to the funeral establishment, use of the establishment for the viewing or for funeral services, use of a hearse or limousine, caskets, outer enclosures, and other itemized services.

DIGEST: SB 864 would require a funeral establishment to include in its retail price list the cost of filing a claim seeking life insurance proceeds on behalf of the beneficiaries.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2011.

SUPPORTERS SAY: Funeral establishments frequently process life insurance claims on behalf of the family of the deceased. The service fee is deducted from the proceeds of the life insurance claim, but the funeral home operator does not have to disclose the charge of filing the life insurance claim when

offering the service. SB 864 would ensure that consumers were aware of the cost of having the funeral establishment file the claim by adding the retail price of filing the claim to the required price list. It would promote transparency and fairness by ensuring full disclosure to the consumer and would protect the bereaved from incurring unexpected costs.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The companion bill, HB 1349 by Marquez, was considered in a public hearing by the House Public Health Committee in April 13 and left pending.