
Public Safety Committee

HB 2470

Brief Description: Concerning coroners and medical examiners regarding death investigations.

Sponsors: Representative Appleton.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires a person who knows of the existence and location of a dead body to notify the medical examiner or coroner.
- Specifies that despite the reason of the death, it is a gross misdemeanor offense to remove or conceal human remains in any way.

Hearing Date: 1/19/16

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

It is the duty of every person who knows of the existence and location of a dead body to notify the coroner in the most expeditious manner possible, unless such person has good reason to believe that such notice has already been given. Any person who fails to give notice to the coroner and local law enforcement is guilty of a misdemeanor offense.

It is also a gross misdemeanor offense for any person, not authorized by the coroner, to remove or conceal the body of a deceased person, that was not claimed by a relative or friend, or who came to their death by reason of violence or unnatural causes, or when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the death was caused by unlawful means at the hands of another person. This offense is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000, imprisonment of up to 364 days in jail, or both imprisonment and a fine.

A misdemeanor offense is punishable by a sentence of up to 90 days in jail, or a maximum fine of \$1,000, or both imprisonment and a fine. A gross misdemeanor offense is punishable by a sentence of up to 364 days in jail or a maximum fine of \$5,000, or both imprisonment and a fine.

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"Human remains" means the body of a deceased person which includes the body in any stage of decomposition, and includes cremated human remains.

Summary of Bill:

A person who knows of the existence and location of a dead body must notify the medical examiner or coroner.

Despite the reason of the death, it is gross misdemeanor offense for any person, not authorized or directed by the coroner, to:

- move, disturb, molest, or interfere with human remains coming within the jurisdiction of the coroner or medical examiner to any undertaking rooms or elsewhere;
- direct, aid, or abet such moving, disturbing, molesting, or taking of human remains; or
- conceal human remains in any way.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2016.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.