

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SHB 1974

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C 57 L 24  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Disposing of human remains.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representatives Abbarno, Bronoske and Doglio).

**House Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary**  
**Senate Committee on Law & Justice**

### **Background:**

Generally, a person has the authority to direct the disposition of their own remains. If a person has not made arrangements or provided directions, or if the cost of executing the person's wishes exceeds a reasonable amount, then responsibility for arranging the disposition and the liability for the costs of the disposition falls to the person's family or guardian.

When a person dies indigent and the person's body is not claimed by relatives or a church organization, it is the responsibility of the board of county commissioners of the county in which the person died to provide for the disposition of the person's remains.

A person or entity in lawful possession of human remains may dispose of those remains after 90 days if no relatives or other persons interested in the decedent direct the disposition of the decedent's remains.

If the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) certifies that the deceased person was a veteran or a dependent of a veteran and is eligible for interment at a federal or state veterans' cemetery, the person or entity in possession of the veteran's or dependent's remains is required to transfer the custody and control of the remains to the DVA. The transfer of human remains to the DVA does not create a private right of action against, or liability on behalf of, the state, person, or entity transferring the remains.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary:**

The time period after which a person or entity may dispose of unclaimed human remains is decreased from 90 days to 45 days.

Counties are added to the list of entities that may lawfully dispose of unclaimed human remains after 45 days. Counties are required to transfer remains to the DVA if the DVA certifies the remains as those of a veteran or dependent, and are exempt from a private right of action or liability concerning the transfer of human remains to the DVA.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	97	0
Senate	49	0

**Effective:** June 6, 2024