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November 2022 • Issue 11

LESSONS FROM QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S FUNERAL: The Importance of a Funeral

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A Trip to Baltimore – An Adventure in D.C.

Phillip Hart
OKFDA President

I write this upon our return home from the 2022 NFDA Convention. What an experience! Seven days in Baltimore and a special day in Washington, D.C. I will share about the convention, then about D.C., and follow up with a few thoughts on the CE classes I attended.

Saturday morning, October 8, began with an eye-opening tour of Mortuary Affairs Operations at Dover Air Force Base. There we toured where our fallen heroes are cared for in a top-notch facility, from a pristine multi-station embalming room, to a dressing area that included multiples of every uniform, patch and medal that could ever be needed, along with a flag pressing area. We heard about the standards for care and pride taken by those who serve there. We then toured Fisher House, which is where they house the immediate family for a night or two as they prepare to meet the plane that carries their precious cargo. The word hospitality came to mind, and it wasn't the last time I heard the word on the trip.

Nationally, they know to expect a great showing from Oklahoma each year. We always participate in both the opening and closing parties. This year my wife Shellie and I, along with our other attendees, enjoyed dressing 1980s for the opening party, hearing some live 80s music. It was great!

Sunday morning provided us an opportunity for preconference CE, and then Monday through Wednesday brought more CE, along with special speakers during general sessions. Several Oklahoma board members attended the swearing in of new NFDA officers and the president, whose multigeneration family of funeral directors has continuously operated a funeral home in Baltimore since the 1830s. Wow! How much change have they witnessed and adjusted to in nearly two centuries of service? Their story should reinforce the notion that we will make it, as well.

With the convention ending on Wednesday, there were seven of us who decided to stay an extra day to tour D.C. on Thursday, and did we ever. We took a commuter train from Penn Station in Baltimore to Union Station in D.C., and it was jaw dropping. My wife and I, along with

a few others in the group, had never stepped foot on such hallowed ground. Well, what can you see and do in a day? We soon spotted Ford Theatre and then found ourselves wandering around the White House area before taking the subway to Arlington National Cemetery. It was more than I could have ever imagined with more than 400,000 of our fallen men and women, plus the rolling hills and trees, and it was all immaculately cared for.

Then there it was, right before us, the Memorial Amphitheater and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We were blessed to witness the Changing of the Guard, which was followed by a private visit in the guard quarters under the amphitheater thanks to our friend, Sheryl Zuker, who pulled that off. There we visited with four guards who shared the ins and outs of guard protocol along with some history. We then hopped back on the cemetery tour bus and were gifted another unforgettable moment as our bus got trapped on a prohibited street and we were able to witness, first hand, a burial with full honors which included both a caisson and military band. It was a moment we won't soon forget! We found ourselves back on the subway headed for the Capitol and the National Mall, where we walked up one side and down the other, both in the light of day and the dark of night. The nation's great memorials, which are jaw dropping and bigger than life, may be best enjoyed while lit up in the darkness. We returned by Amtrak to Baltimore at midnight. What an adventure!

I'll bring us back to the real world of serving families in Oklahoma with a few notable thoughts from the CE classes I sat in on during that week. I'll share the class topic and then a thought. **Millennial Professionals** – by 2025, 75% of the workforce in America will be millennials. If you decide to implement something new at your firm, put a millennial in charge and watch them thrive. They want to contribute and be recognized. **Embalming** – in these days of technology and the fact that families can do lots of things online, a great embalming may be the best thing you have to sell. You want to be known as the best

body funeral home. **Compete on Service** – leading with service, you will always be priced right. Don't lower your prices, but rather, be worth your charge. Leading with service will increase the satisfaction of your staff as well. **Transformative Power of Hospitality** – first impressions are lasting impressions. Have you thought about sending your employees to hospitality school? Become a "hospitalian" and remember, surprise multiplies effect. **Cremation Success** – Upsell by offering them the world and they will likely take it. Well, that's all for now, but you haven't heard the last of these topics from me. Oh, and don't forget to check out the brand new OKFDA website. It will be a game changer for all of our members.

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“LAST CALL” CONTINUING EDUCATION

“Procrastination is the grave in which opportunity is buried.”

Renewing our Funeral Director and/or Embalming licenses is coming up quick and ensuring we get our CE every year is a crucial part in keeping our licenses.

“Last Call” CE will be held at Barnes Friederich Funeral Home (1820 S. Douglas Blvd, Midwest City, Oklahoma 73130) on Sunday, December 4, 2022 from 1:00pm to 7:30pm and Monday, December 5, 2022 from 8:30am to 2:50pm. **A meal will be provided both days.**

There is no charge for OKFDA Members to join us for CE.

There is a **\$125** charge for **non OKFDA members**.

We are offering a total of six (6) Continuing Education Hours, two (2) of which will be over ethics.

Please RSVP at least **three (3) days** before the day of the class you will be attending by calling **405-843-0730**, emailing **info@okfda.com**, or by texting **405-843-0730**.

OKFDA accepts **cash, checks** (made out to OKFDA) and **credit cards**.

We hope to see you at our “Last Call” Continuing Education Course!



Last Call CE Program Available

Dustin Pierce
OKFDA Executive Director

Your OKFDA Executive Board just travelled to Baltimore, Maryland, for the International NFDA Convention and Expo. If you never have attended a national convention, you are missing out. There is so much to do and learn.

On Saturday before the convention, NFDA hosted the Dover Air Force Base Mortuary Orientation. What a humbling experience that was. We witnessed every aspect of the process of preparing and getting our fallen heroes back to their home communities. Our country owes a debt to the men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms. Our freedoms were paid by the blood shed by all our service men and women.

On our last full day in Baltimore, we rode the train to Washington, D.C., to witness the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. What an experience that was. Most of us had not ever witnessed this sacred ceremony. Arlington National Cemetery is a breath-taking place—rolling hills, tall oaks trees, and row after row of white marble headstones standing at attention. I have visited Arlington many times over the years, but by the grace of God we were witnesses to a full military honors funeral with a full Army Band, the casket being carried by a caisson, and the riderless horse. Getting to witness that level of a military funeral was probably a once in a lifetime experience.

Membership applications have been mailed out. If you haven't received yours in the mail, please let me know by emailing info@okfda.com. We have also scheduled our Last Call CE Program. OKFDA will provide members with six full hours of education; the cost of the education is included in your membership. If you need education, please sign up by calling, texting, or emailing.

I want to leave you with this quote "There are two ways of building the biggest building in town. One is to outright build the biggest building, and the second is the tear down all the buildings around you." How do you want to be remembered?

In the October issue I inadvertently left out Heartland Caskets, one of our District II Social Time Sponsors. OKFDA appreciates everything our sponsors do to support our association.

As always, if I can do anything to help you, please let me know.

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Moisture Complications

By Wally Hooker

This article is the fourth in a series to appear in Oklahoma Director. The initial article in August 2022 reviewed the basics of body preparation. The second covered pre-injection and beginning arterial embalming.

As we face the daily challenges of embalming, which is the temporary preservation, sanitizing and restoring of the dead back to a natural or an acceptable appearance, it should be our goal to pull out all the stops to ensure open casket viewing. We are all striving for family and friends to have the opportunity to say a proper goodbye to their loved one. Often times many difficult obstacles must be overcome. One of the more common challenges we face is moisture content of the deceased.

Dehydration and edema (fluid accumulation) are issues we face routinely in our preparation rooms. Both can be extreme and are generally the result of surgical complications, drug therapies or the ravages of disease. As an example, edema can be localized to the face and neck following heart surgery and those areas can be grossly enlarged. Edema can also be generalized (anasarca) and present in all tissues. The condition where excessive moisture is retained by the cells, is called solid edema, the tissue is swollen and hard to the touch. It is nearly impossible to overcome with arterial embalming. Pitting edema is soft and can be palpated with a finger, leaving a depression that will return when pressure of the finger is relieved. Of the two, pitting edema is a more



manageable condition that we attempt to overcome with arterial embalming, as well as gravity and time, which we'll discuss in more detail.

It is important to understand the difference between dehydration and emaciation. Dehydration is the loss of body moisture due to disease, sickness and febrile issues. One indicator would be the lips – most healthy adults have vertical lines on the lips. Dehydration will present itself in the lips where they become flattened and the lines are horizontal. As we discussed in an earlier column, the pre-case analysis is all-important in these scenarios. Let the body tell you its story!

Dehydration can occur prior to death, as well as following death due to physical or environmental factors. Often the skin is very dry

and flaky. Eyelids may be very thin and difficult to close. Following a thorough disinfecting and bathing, I would suggest saturating the face with a humectant. Open the eyelids and attempt to rehydrate them by saturating them and placing a small piece of saturated cotton on the eyeball and close the eyelid to the proper position. I use saturated Webril cotton on the eyelid itself to assist in keeping the eyelids in position. The lips will need humectant as well. As you set the features of the mouth, saturate any cotton you place on the inside with humectant. We don't want further dehydration caused by dry cotton inside wicking the delicate tissues of the mouth.

I would suggest a pre-injection using a co-injection, water corrective (the pH of the dehydrated body will be off) humectant and enough water to make a gallon of solution. Inject with a low rate of flow with no drainage established and you should be able to introduce the entire gallon without swelling the tissue of the face or neck. I would leave the pre-injection solution in the closed vascular system for 20 to 30 minutes. Let the body tell you what arterial chemical is needed and in what solution strength. I would mix one gallon at a time and add a bottle of humectant to plump the tissue and restore moisture using the restricted cervical injection and restricted drainage. You need extra control over injecting the head. The use of humectants can plump and rehydrate the tissue in harmony, which creates a more natural form. Any shortfall can be overcome using tissue building.

Much has been written, spoken and demonstrated as far as embalming grossly edematous bodies. It remains one of the more challenging cases we face. The goal again is to have the deceased presentable. Often, the families have seen their loved ones in this dreadful condition and look to us to "give them back" their loved one, the way they were before they fell ill.

First things first! If someone in our care had gained significant water weight prior to death, we certainly don't want to compound the situation by adding more water to an already supersaturated body! These bodies are difficult to properly preserve with this additional moisture. Most have been hospitalized for an extended period of time and administered various drugs

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to fight the disease in an attempt to extend life. As a result, in addition to the edema, their cells will more than likely contain nitrogenous wastes as a result of the body metabolizing drug therapy. The nitrogenous waste, coupled with edema creates a difficult chemical/physical scenario to overcome. This challenging situation is why it is so important to have a thorough working knowledge of your chemicals.

Again, the primary goal in embalming a grossly edematous body is preservation and restoration. As we consider mixing our arterial solution for the case at hand, much consideration should be given to the amount of additional water weight the deceased has taken on and has retained in the intercellular areas of the body. We know water weighs 8.33 pounds/gallon. For example, if the deceased had taken on 50 pounds of water weight during the final stages of their life, that would equate to slightly more than 6 U.S. gallons. This amount of moisture within the body will certainly be a factor as we prepare our arterial solution and select our injection sites.

Next month we will look in more detail at the embalming, chemical and physical protocols necessary to manage edematous cases to ensure open casket results. Until then, stay safe my friends and always go the extra mile in caring for the dead!

Wallace P. (Wally) Hooker, CFSP, MBIE, is the owner, funeral director and embalmer of Family and Friends Funeral Home of Wingate, Indiana. He and his wife, Janet, designed, established and built their funeral home in 2004. Wally is a graduate of Worsham College of Mortuary Science, where he serves on the Advisory Board. He is past president of the Indiana Funeral Directors Association and board member of North American Division of the British Institute of Embalmers. In addition, he has served as the chief deputy coroner/investigator of Fountain County, Indiana, for 24 years.

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Lessons from Queen Elizabeth II's Funeral: The Importance of a Funeral

By Marty Ludlum & Kara Gray Ludlum



On September 8, 2022, H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-reigning British monarch, died at the age of 96 at Balmoral Castle outside Aberdeen, Scotland. The events related to her funeral have been some of the most watched events in television history. Of course, the Queen's funeral was not a typical funeral because she was not a typical person. Besides having served as the Head of State of the United Kingdom, the Queen also served the Commonwealth Nations, which include Canada, Australia, India, Cameroon, New Zealand, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and numerous island nations. In addition, she served as the head of the Church of England (Anglican Church).

Besides the social, political and religious significance, the funeral events of Queen Elizabeth II provide important lessons for those in the funeral profession.

Our family has a special relationship to England. In 1988, Marty spent a semester of law school at Queen's College, Oxford. After school ended, Kara joined him, and they toured England. Since, Marty and Kara returned to England whenever possible, often bringing their children, Bailey and Justin. For

the past dozen years, Marty (a professor at UCO) has taken a study tour each summer to England, transforming another generation of students, and often including Kara, Bailey, and Justin. We consider England our second home.

So how can the events of the Queen's funeral inform the funeral home profession? Let's quickly examine the details.

The Queen's coffin lay at rest at the St. Giles Cathedral in Scotland for 24 hours, during which 33,000 filed past (1,400 people per hour, around the clock). Next, the Queen was in state in Westminster Hall for five days during which time an estimated 250,000 people queued to pay their respects. At its biggest, the main waiting line was approximately 10 miles long and had a waiting time of over 20 hours.

After the state funeral service at Westminster Abbey attended by over 150 world leaders, the processional drove to Windsor. The processional used smaller roadways (not the main highway) to allow the public to line the route. Several hundred thousand people stood on the roadway in tribute and tossed flowers. The final procession along the three-mile Long Walk to St. George's Chapel had nearly

100,000 paying their respects.

Many outside the funeral home profession draw the wrong conclusion from these events. They look at this and claim, "Over 150 world leaders, very impressive, but none of them would show up to my funeral."

I doubt any of us will have a funeral attended by 150 world leaders. But that is not the takeaway from these events. The moral is the importance of a funeral for everyone.

As a funeral home professional, you have likely heard people (pre) planning make the following statements:

"No need for a funeral. I'll be gone."

"Oh, it will be small. Maybe no need for a funeral."

"I don't have any family."

Again, look to the recent events in England. Yes, almost every nation sent a leader to the state funeral in Westminster Abbey. That is to be expected when a world leader is gone. It is impressive, but I was more moved by the regular people who participated in the events.

Many news stations interviewed the thousands who waited in line for hours for a quick moment of respect. I was impressed by the tens of thousands who brought flowers to Buckingham Palace in honor of the Queen. Of those, none were family. None were close, personal friends with the Queen. Few had even seen the Queen in person. Still, they were moved to wait in line for long hours to pay tribute to the Queen. They waited for hours just to place some flowers near Buckingham Palace.

What does this tell you? I can describe it in three simple statements.

First, the funeral is not for the deceased.

Second, the funeral is not just for the family and close friends.

Third, your life affected more people than you know. Your life affected people you may not even know. Your loss will be experienced by more people than you estimate.

The impact of the funeral is not the status of those who show compassion, nor the number of people who show compassion, but rather by the amount of compassion shown by the people left behind.

About the authors

Professor Marty Ludlum teaches business law at the University of Central Oklahoma and is a licensed attorney. He has made numerous presentations on the funeral industry at state and national conventions and has written articles for national and state funeral magazines. Professor Ludlum has a Bachelor's and Master's degree in economics, a Master's degree in communication and a Juris Doctor, all from the University of Oklahoma. Professor Ludlum also serves as the Education Director for Osiris Funeral Home Software. For questions, he can be reached at LudlumLaw-Firm@gmail.com.

Kara Gray Ludlum is a CPA and licensed Funeral Director in Oklahoma. She has made many presentations to state and national conventions. Kara has Bachelor's degree in business from the University of Oklahoma and an MSB from Cameron University. Kara has taught accounting at Cameron University, has owned and operated her family's funeral homes for over 15 years and operates Funeral Director's Resource, Inc., a consulting firm

specializing in providing computer software and funeral home accounting to the funeral

industry. For questions, she can be reached at KLudlum@FDRinc.net.

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Data Shows COVID-19 Impact on Funeral Service is Significant

The long-lasting repercussions of COVID-19 are only just now being fully understood as data from the last two years becomes more widely accessible. Data from the 2022 Cremation and Burial Report, released by the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA), shows that one of the most notably impacted is the funeral service profession.

COVID-19-related fatalities in the U.S. increased the total number of deaths by 543,000 in 2021; the pandemic is expected to cause an additional 289,000 deaths in 2022. The most significant impacts of the pandemic on funeral homes and services can be seen in the following areas:

Technology's Pivotal Role in Memorial Services: A significant spike in demand was seen when 74.4% of funeral homes reported that the number of families they served increased, especially in large metropolitan areas. While some funeral homes already offered livestreaming services, since the onset of the pandemic, more than half of NFDA-member funeral homes began doing so to help families safely gather while adhering to restrictions on public gatherings. Funeral homes are predicted to continue to expand this and other offerings – such as virtual funerals and an increased array of options to meet the needs of families with diverse cultural and faith traditions – in the future.

Increase in Online Arrangements: 40% of NFDA funeral homes now offer online cremation arrangements; 28.2% plan to offer the ability to make cremation arrangements online within the next five years. NFDA's 2022 Consumer Awareness & Preferences Report noted that while many more consumers are venturing online to plan a funeral or memorial service, more than half (53.7%) noted that even though they had a good experience, they still needed the assistance of a funeral director. Nearly 10% indicated they did not get the personalized service they would have received had they worked with a funeral director and just over 1% said planning online was impersonal and not a good experience for their family.

Crematory Ownership Up: With the annual number of cremations in the U.S.

expected to rise from 1.91 million in 2022 to 2.26 million by 2030, and to 2.94 million by 2040, there has, in turn, been growth in the number of funeral homes operating their own crematories. Approximately 39% of funeral homes in the country now operate their own crematories, and another 12% plan to open their own within the next five years. The highest concentration of crematories in the U.S. are in the Southeast, Great Lakes, and Mid-Atlantic regions where there tends to be a higher population density and a higher percentage of people 65 or older.

Labor Shortage: The employment rate for funeral service workers is expected to grow by 4% from 2020 to 2030, thus many firms anticipate hiring eligible workers to be a future challenge.

As cremation becomes more socially accepted among the public, another factor contributing to it outnumbering traditional burials in the U.S. is the rise in the number of Americans who do not identify with a reli-

gion. Other factors at play include lower costs associated with cremation services, changing consumer preferences, weakening prohibitions and environmental concerns.

In 2021, NFDA member funeral homes reported 41% of consumers chose a direct cremation, 35% chose a cremation with memorial service and 24% chose a casketed adult funeral with viewing and cremation. NFDA projects the cremation rate in all 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. will exceed 50% by 2035.

“Even though it's been a couple years since the onset of the pandemic, we are just now seeing the data that reflects the true impact and influence it has had on the way people memorialize and grieve their loved ones,” said NFDA President Randy Anderson, CFSP, COO. “As funeral directors, we are always here to assist and guide families in our communities to create an experience that they prefer, whether it's blending familiar rituals with contemporary preferences, like cremation, or

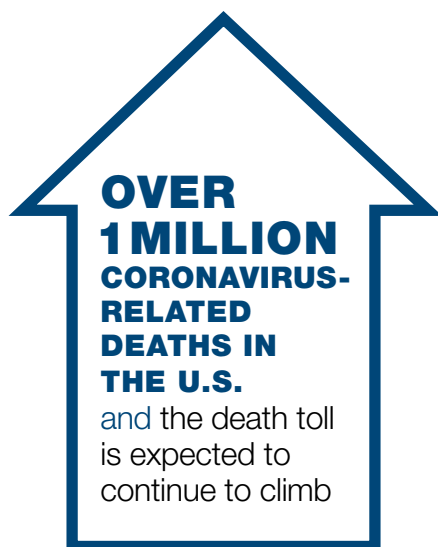
Percentage Who Feel a Religious Component in a Funeral of a Loved One Is Very Important



The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to **INCREASE THE NUMBER OF U.S. DEATHS ABOVE THE NORMAL AVERAGE** by 543,000 in 2021 and 289,000 in 2022



Employment of funeral service workers is projected **TO GROW ONLY 4%** from 2020 to 2030. NFDA-member firms feel their **GREATEST BUSINESS CHALLENGE OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS** will be availability of qualified personnel.



planning a tradition funeral and memorial service, to help them grieve and heal in the best way possible for them.”

NFDA members may download a complimentary copy of the 2022 Cremation & Burial Report via the NFDA Store, www.nfda.org/store (click the “Downloadable Products” category). Nonmembers may purchase the report for \$175.

About the NFDA 2022 Cremation and Burial Report

The statistical projections contained in the 2022 NFDA Cremation and Burial Report were compiled by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Applied Population Laboratory Department of Community and Environmental Sociology. State-level deaths by “method of disposition” data were collected from state vital statistics departments or similar state regulatory agencies for the years 2002-2020. Other findings presented in the report are from proprietary NFDA research studies, such as the 2022 NFDA Consumer Awareness & Preferences Study.



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Body Broker Bill Introduced in the Senate

With the introduction of the Consensual Donation and Research Integrity Act (CDRI Act) (S. 4929) in mid-September by Sens. Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Thom Tillis (R-NC), the Senate took a significant step toward bringing meaningful change to the largely unregulated process of whole body donation.

Donating a loved one's body for medical research upon their death – particularly if that individual dealt with health challenges – can help bring healing and comfort to a family, knowing that their gift may help advance scientific knowledge and discoveries. However, unscrupulous actors, sometimes known as “body brokers,” take advantage of this generosity and sell or lease bodies and body parts at a significant profit.

“It’s hard to imagine, in this day and age, that whole body donation isn’t regulated,” said National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) President Randall P. “Randy” An-

derson, CFSP, CCO. “What’s even harder to hear are the stories from families that have experienced heartbreak and grief when they discovered the bodies of their loved ones has been desecrated and sold – sometimes repeatedly – by body brokers. NFDA and its members strongly urge the Senate and House to pass the CDRI Act and provide long-overdue accountability and transparency to the whole-body donation process. This will help ensure donors’ bodies are treated with dignity and respect at all times.”

When a family donates a loved one’s organs or tissues for transplantation, the process is transparent and tightly regulated and families have the ability to specify which organs they wish to donate and can opt for an open-casket funeral.

Non-transplant tissue banks, which accept whole body donations, however, are not covered by the same laws that cover organ and tissue transplantation. There is

little federal or state oversight and almost anyone, regardless of expertise, can dissect and sell or lease human bodies and body parts, generating substantial profits.

The CDRI Act, which was introduced by Reps. Bobby Rush (D-IL) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) in the House last year (H.R. 4062), would transform the landscape by providing the Secretary of Health and Human Services with oversight of entities that deal with human bodies and non-transplantable body parts donated for education, research, and the advancement of medical, dental and mortuary science. Registered members of the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, which are already strictly regulated, would be exempt.

The bill also, among other things, creates a clear chain of custody for each human body or body part; ensures shipments of human bodies and body parts are properly labeled and packaged; and ensures the respectful and proper disposition of donated bodies and body parts. Additionally, the CDRI Act establishes penalties for violations.

“The exploitation of bodies that have been donated for education or research is deeply disturbing and heartbreaking for the families who expect their loved one’s remains to be treated with dignity. For too long, an unregulated industry has allowed body brokers to profit off donor bodies and their grieving families, disproportionately impacting the poor and elderly. This legislation would increase accountability and transparency and stop bad actors from committing these gross abuses,” said Murphy.

“Most Americans would be shocked to learn that there is a for-profit body broker industry that creates significant ethical dilemmas and public health threats because of a lack of regulation,” said Tillis. “Our bipartisan legislation will introduce much-needed accountability and regulatory oversight to protect public health and ensure that donors and their families are treated with respect and dignity.”

For more information about the CDRI Act, visit www.nfda.org/bodybrokerbill or contact NFDA Senior Vice President, Advocacy, Lesley Witter at lwitter@nfda.org.

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