

## **TESTIMONY REGARDING RHODE ISLAND BILL NUMBER HR 5110**

Submitted by Erik Stachurski, Rhode Island Resident

Although I am unable to make the live hearing because of work, I wanted to get my testimony on record as strongly FOR the passage of this bill. I have three primary reasons why.

First, as a Rhode Island resident and citizen, I believe strongly that there should be more choice in how one chooses to handle the disposition of their remains. I realize that this is a difficult subject, but as it currently stands, for me to have my remains undergo natural organic reduction, I have to contract with a company based out of the state of Washington. This involves significant effort and expense to ship my remains there then have them returned and defeats the purpose of an environmentally friendly burial. This should be a choice in Rhode Island for Rhode Islanders – we could be a leader in New England if we have the courage to choose it.

Second, as a member of the world community, making energy conscious and green-related moves is good for our environment and our society. I realize that this is where things get difficult from a philosophical and religious point of view, but we also must be pragmatic about how we choose to handle human remains as stewards of this planet. Traditional burial including embalming takes up valuable space and introduces some dangerous chemicals, necessitating even more effort by lining graves with material to avoid seepage. Cremation involves using fossil fuels to burn a typical corpse at 1800-2000 degrees Fahrenheit for a couple of hours to reduce the body to ash – it is very energy-intensive with carbon dioxide and other emissions as an unwanted side effect. Natural organic reduction is exactly as described – instead of chemicals, fire, or other means, the body is allowed to naturally decompose and our remains returned to the planet from whence we came.

Third, as a businessperson and entrepreneur here in Rhode Island, I have built and sold companies in Rhode Island since 1999 and created many jobs and opportunities with the businesses I have built. The opportunity to create a cost-efficient, environmentally friendly choice of disposing one's remains here in Rhode Island can be a lucrative one for the state and its citizens. Once I realized I have to ship my remains across the country to achieve what could be done right here, I realized that we are missing a golden opportunity.

Bottom line, by expanding the choices with which we can dispose of our remains, Rhode Island can become a local and regional leader. It is an efficient, effective, environmentally friendly way to allow New Englanders to return to the earth. It makes environmental sense, business sense, and most of all, it allows for more choices for each of us as individuals for what is a difficult decision we all must one day make. Thank you for your time and consideration.