1	SENATE BILL 368
2	57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025
3	INTRODUCED BY
4	Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics and Marian Matthews
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10	AN ACT
11	RELATING TO CREMATION; EXPANDING THE DEFINITION OF "CREMATION"
12	TO INCLUDE REDUCTION BY CHEMICAL AGENT OR BIOLOGICAL PROCESS;
13	PROVIDING FOR TRADITIONAL AND NONTRADITIONAL CREMATION
14	PROCESSES IN THE FUNERAL SERVICES ACT.
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16	BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:
17	SECTION 1. Section 24-12A-1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1993,
18	Chapter 200, Section 1, as amended) is amended to read:
19	"24-12A-1. RIGHT TO AUTHORIZE CREMATIONDEFINITIONS
20	A. An adult may authorize the adult's own cremation
21	and the lawful disposition of the cremated remains by:
22	(1) stating the desire to be cremated in a
23	written statement that is signed by the adult and notarized or
24	witnessed by two persons; or
25	(2) including an express statement in the will
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indicating that the testator desired that the remains be
 cremated upon death; and

3 (3) specifying in the written or express
4 statement the type of cremation intended by the authorization.

B. A personal representative acting pursuant to a will or the provisions of Chapter 45, Article 3 NMSA 1978 or a funeral service establishment, a direct disposition establishment or a crematory shall comply with a statement made in conformance with the provisions of Subsection A of this section. The statement is authorization to the personal representative, funeral establishment, direct disposition establishment or crematory that the remains of the decedent are to be cremated. Statements dated prior to April 5, 1993 are to be given effect if they meet the requirements of Subsection A of this section.

C. A personal representative, funeral service establishment, direct disposition establishment or crematory acting in reliance upon a document executed pursuant to the provisions of this section, who has no actual notice of revocation or contrary indication, is presumed to be acting in good faith.

D. A funeral service establishment, direct disposition establishment, crematory or employee of a funeral establishment, direct disposition establishment or crematory or other person that relies in good faith on a statement written .229189.1 - 2 -

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pursuant to this section shall not be subject to liability for cremating the remains in accordance with the express instructions of a decedent. The written document is a complete defense to a cause of action by any person against any other person acting in accordance with the instructions of the decedent.

E. As used in this section:

(1) "cremate" means to reduce a dead human body by direct flame, <u>chemical agent or biological processing</u> to a residue <u>or soil</u> that may include bone fragments; and

(2) "direct disposition establishment" means an office, premises or place of business that provides for the disposition of a dead human body as quickly as possible, without a funeral, graveside service, committal service or memorial service, whether public or private, and without embalming of the body unless embalming is required by the place of disposition."

SECTION 2. Section 58-17-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 2001, Chapter 149, Section 3) is amended to read:

"58-17-3. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Endowed Care Cemetery Act:

A. "affiliate" means a corporation that is related to another corporation by shareholdings or other means of control and includes a subsidiary, parent or sibling corporation;

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1 Β. "burial park" means a tract of land that has 2 been dedicated to the purposes of and used, and intended to be 3 used, for the interment of remains in graves; "care funds" means realty or personalty 4 C. 5 impressed with a trust by the terms of a gift, grant, contribution, payment, devise, bequest or contract and income 6 7 accumulated therefrom where legally so directed by the terms of the transaction by which the principal was established; 8 9 D. "cemetery" means a place dedicated to and used 10 and intended to be used for the permanent interment of remains; 11 Ε. "cemetery authority" means a person that owns, 12 operates, controls or manages a cemetery or holds lands for 13 burial purposes; 14 F. "columbarium" means a structure or space in a 15 structure used, or intended to be used, to contain cremated 16 remains; 17 G. "cremated remains" means remains after 18 [incineration in a crematory] reduction of a dead human body by 19 any cremation process; 20 "cremation" means [the irreversible process of] н. 21 reducing remains [to bone fragments through intense heat and 22 evaporation in a specifically designed furnace or retort] by 23 direct flame, chemical agent or biological processing and 24 [includes] may include a mechanical or thermal process whereby 25 the bone fragments are pulverized [or otherwise further reduced .229189.1

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in size or quantity];

I. "crematory" means [a structure of most durable
and lasting fireproof construction containing one or more
specifically designed furnaces or retorts, used, or intended to
be used, for] every place or premise that is used for cremation
and pulverization of remains;

J. "crypt" means the chamber in a mausoleum of8 sufficient size to entomb the remains;

9 K. "depository institution" means an insured bank,
10 thrift institution or credit union;

11 L. "director" means the director of the financial 12 institutions division of the regulation and licensing 13 department;

M. "endowed care" means the general maintenance of the cemetery area dedicated to endowed care, including the cutting and trimming of lawns, shrubs and trees at reasonable intervals, keeping all places where interments have been made in proper order <u>and</u> keeping in repair the drains, waterlines, roads, buildings, fences and other structures consistent with a well-maintained cemetery; "endowed care" includes overhead expenses necessary for the foregoing purposes, including maintenance of machinery, tools and equipment, compensation of employees for the performance of duties related to endowed care, including reasonable payments for employees' pension and other benefit plans, payment of reasonable and necessary .229189.1

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1 insurance premiums, the maintenance of necessary records of lot 2 ownership, transfers and burials and the administration of care 3 funds in those instances where those administering the funds 4 fail or refuse to act;

5 N. "endowed or perpetual care cemetery" means a
6 cemetery or that designated portion of a cemetery for the
7 benefit of which a care fund is established;

8 0. "entombment" means the permanent interment of9 remains in a crypt or vault;

P. "fraternal cemetery" means a cemetery owned, operated, controlled or managed by any fraternal organization or its auxiliary organizations, in which the sale of burial space is restricted principally to its members;

Q. "grave" means a space of ground in a burial park intended to be used for the permanent interment in the ground of remains;

R. "interment" means the permanent disposition of the remains by inurnment, entombment or burial;

S. "inurnment" means placing cremated remains in an urn;

T. "lot", "plot" or "burial space" means space in a cemetery owned by one or more individuals, an association or fraternal or other organization and used, or intended to be used, for the permanent interment of the remains of one or more deceased persons and includes adjoining graves, adjoining .229189.1 - 6 -

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crypts or adjoining niches;

U. "mausoleum" means a structure or building of most durable and lasting fireproof construction used or intended to be used for the permanent interment in crypts of remains;

V. "municipal cemetery" means a cemetery owned,
operated, controlled or managed by [a] <u>an</u> incorporated or
unincorporated political subdivision;

9 W. "niche" means a recess in a columbarium used, or 10 intended to be used, for the permanent interment of cremated 11 remains;

X. "no endowed care cemetery" means a cemetery for the benefit of which no care fund has been established;

Y. "plot owner", "owner" or "lot proprietor" means a person in whose name a burial plot is recorded in the office of the cemetery authority as owner of the exclusive right of burial, or who holds from the authority a conveyance of the exclusive rights of burial or a certificate of ownership of the exclusive right of burial;

Z. "religious cemetery" means a cemetery owned, operated, controlled or managed by a recognized church, religious society, association or denomination, or by a cemetery authority or a corporation administering, or through which is administered the secular matters of a recognized church, religious society, association or denomination; .229189.1

1 AA. "remains" means the body of a deceased person; 2 and 3 BB. "vault" means a container that is designed for placement in a grave space around a casket or urn." 4 SECTION 3. Section 61-32-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1993, 5 6 Chapter 204, Section 3, as amended) is amended to read: 7 "61-32-3. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Funeral Services 8 Act: 9 A. "alkaline hydrolysis" means the process of 10 reducing a dead human body to its elemental components using 11 water, alkaline chemicals and heat inside a watertight vessel; 12 [A.] B. "board" means the board of funeral 13 services; 14 [B.] C. "committal service" means a service at a 15 place of interment or entombment that follows a funeral 16 conducted at another location; 17 [G.] D. "cremains" means cremated remains or soil; 18 $[D_{\cdot}] \ge C$ "cremation" means the reduction of a dead 19 human body by direct flame, chemical agent or biological 20 process to a residue or soil that includes bone fragments; 21 [E.] F. "crematory" means every place or premises 22 that is devoted to or used for cremation and pulverization of 23 the cremains: 24 [F.] G. "crematory authority" means the individual 25 who is ultimately responsible for the operation of a crematory;

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[G.] <u>H.</u> "department" means the regulation and licensing department;

[H.] <u>I.</u> "direct disposer" means a person licensed to engage solely in providing direct disposition at a direct disposition establishment, licensed pursuant to the Funeral Services Act, as provided in that act;

[I.] J. "direct disposition" means only the disposition of a dead human body as quickly as possible, without a direct disposer performing or arranging a funeral, graveside service, committal service or memorial service, whether public or private, and without embalming of the body unless embalming is required by the place of disposition;

[J.] <u>K.</u> "direct supervision" means that the supervising funeral service practitioner is physically present with and in direct control of the person being trained;

[K.] L. "disposition" means the final disposal of a dead human body, whether it be by earth interment, above-ground interment or entombment, cremation, burial at sea or delivery to a medical school, when the medical school assumes complete responsibility for the disposal of the body following medical study;

[L.] <u>M.</u> "embalmer" means a person licensed to engage in embalming and preparing a dead human body for funeral service at a funeral establishment that is licensed pursuant to the Funeral Services Act;

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1 [M.] N. "embalming" means the disinfection, 2 preservation and restoration, when possible, of a dead human 3 body by a licensed funeral service practitioner, licensed 4 embalmer or a licensed funeral service intern under the 5 supervision of a licensed funeral service practitioner; [N.] O. "ennichement" means interment of cremains 6 7 in a niche in a columbarium, whether in an urn or not; 8 [0.] P. "entombment" means interment of a casketed 9 body or cremains in a crypt in a mausoleum; 10 [P.] Q. "establishment" means every office, 11 premises or place of business where the practice of funeral 12 service or direct disposition is conducted or advertised as 13 being conducted and includes commercial establishments that 14 provide for the practice of funeral service or direct 15 disposition services exclusively to licensed funeral or direct 16 disposition establishments or a school of medicine; 17 [Q.] R. "funeral" means a period following death in 18 which there is an organized, purposeful, time-limited, group-19 centered ceremony or rite, whether religious or not, with the 20 body of the deceased present; 21 [R.] S. "funeral arranger" means a person licensed 22 to engage in arrangements and directing of funeral services at 23 a funeral establishment that is licensed pursuant to the 24 Funeral Services Act; 25

[S.] <u>T.</u> "funeral merchandise" means that personal .229189.1

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property offered for sale in connection with the transportation, funeralization or disposition of a dead human body, including the enclosure into which a dead human body is or cremains are directly placed, and excluding mausoleum crypts, interment enclosures preset in a cemetery and columbarium niches;

[T.] U. "funeral service intern" means a person licensed to be in training for the practice of funeral service under the supervision and instruction of a funeral service practitioner at a funeral establishment or commercial establishment, licensed pursuant to the Funeral Services Act;

[U.] V. "funeral service practitioner" means a person licensed to engage in the practice of funeral service at a funeral establishment or commercial establishment that is licensed pursuant to the Funeral Services Act;

[V.] W. "funeral services" means those immediate post-death activities related to a dead human body and its care and disposition, whether with or without rites or ceremonies; but "funeral services" does not include disposition of the body by a school of medicine following medical study;

 $[W_{\bullet}]$ X. "general supervision" means that the supervising funeral service practitioner is not necessarily physically present in the establishment with the person being trained but is available for advice and assistance;

[X.] Y. "graveside service" means a funeral held at .229189.1
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the graveside only, excluding a committal service that follows a funeral conducted at another location;

[¥.] Z. "jurisprudence examination" means an examination prescribed by the board on the statutes, rules and regulations pertaining to the practice of funeral service or direct disposition, including the Funeral Services Act, the rules of the board, state health regulations governing human remains and the Vital Statistics Act;

[Z.] AA. "licensee in charge" means a funeral service practitioner who is ultimately responsible for the conduct of a funeral or commercial establishment and its employees; or a direct disposer who is ultimately responsible for the conduct of a direct disposition establishment and its employees;

[AA.] <u>BB.</u> "make arrangements" means advising or counseling about specific details for a funeral, graveside service, committal service, memorial service, disposition or direct disposition;

[BB.] <u>CC.</u> "memorial service" means a gathering of persons for recognition of a death without the presence of the body of the deceased;

DD. "natural organic reduction" means the biological process of reducing a dead human body to the body's elemental components using organic materials and heat inside a watertight vessel;

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1	EE. "nontraditional cremation" means the reduction
2	of a dead human body to the body's elemental components,
3	whether in ash or soil, through a chemical or biological
4	process, including alkaline hydrolysis and natural organic
5	reduction;
6	[CC.] <u>FF.</u> "practice of funeral service" means those
7	activities allowed under the Funeral Services Act by a funeral
8	service practitioner, funeral arranger, embalmer or funeral
9	service intern; [and]
10	[DD.] <u>GG.</u> "pulverization" means the process that
11	reduces cremains to a granular substance; and
12	HH. "traditional cremation" means the reduction of
13	a dead human body by direct flame to a residue that may include
14	bone fragments."
15	SECTION 4. Section 61-32-11 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1993,
16	Chapter 204, Section 11, as amended) is amended to read:
17	"61-32-11. LICENSURE OF ESTABLISHMENTSFUNERAL
18	ESTABLISHMENTSCOMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTSDIRECT DISPOSITION
19	ESTABLISHMENTSCREMATORIES
20	A. Funeral establishment licenses shall only be
21	granted under the following terms and conditions:
22	(1) applications for licensure shall be upon
23	forms furnished by the board and shall be accompanied by the
24	required fee;
25	(2) the establishment shall be maintained at a
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1	specific location primarily devoted to the practice of funeral
2	service and shall comply with the following minimum
3	requirements:
4	(a) a chapel shall be present in which
5	funerals may be conducted;
6	(b) a display room shall be present for
7	displaying caskets and other funeral merchandise; and
8	(c) a preparation room shall be present
9	with necessary drainage and ventilation and necessary
10	instruments and supplies for the preparation and embalming of
11	dead human bodies for burial or other disposition or
12	transportation; and
13	(3) a license shall not be issued or renewed
14	by the board unless the establishment is in compliance with the
15	Funeral Services Act and board rules.
16	B. Commercial establishment licenses shall only be
17	granted under the following terms and conditions:
18	(1) applications for licensure shall be upon
19	forms furnished by the board and shall be accompanied by the
20	required fee;
21	(2) the establishment shall be maintained at a
22	specific location primarily devoted to the practice allowed for
23	a commercial establishment and shall comply with the following
24	minimum requirements:
25	(a) a preparation room shall be present
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1 with the necessary drainage and ventilation and necessary 2 instruments and supplies for the preparation and embalming of 3 dead human bodies for burial or other disposition and 4 transportation; and 5 an office shall be present for (b) conducting business; and 6 7 a license shall not be issued or renewed (3) 8 by the board unless the establishment is in compliance with the 9 Funeral Services Act and board rules. 10 C. Direct disposition establishment licenses shall only be granted under the following terms and conditions: 11 12 applications for licensure shall be upon (1)13 forms furnished by the board and shall be accompanied by the 14 required fee; 15 the establishment shall be maintained at a (2)16 specific location primarily devoted to the practice allowed for 17 a direct disposer and shall comply with the following minimum 18 requirements: 19 (a) a room shall be present with 20 necessary drainage and ventilation for housing a refrigeration 21 unit; 22 (b) a refrigeration unit, 23 thermodynamically controlled with a minimum storage area of 24 twelve and one-half cubic feet per body, shall be present for 25 sheltering of dead human bodies prior to burial or other .229189.1 - 15 -

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1 disposition or transportation; 2 (c) an office shall be present for 3 conducting business; 4 necessary supplies for safely (d) 5 handling unembalmed dead human bodies; and 6 (e) if funeral merchandise is made 7 available, a display room shall be present for displaying 8 caskets and other funeral merchandise; and 9 no license shall be issued or renewed by (3) 10 the board unless the establishment is in compliance with the 11 Funeral Services Act and board rules. 12 Crematory licenses shall only be granted under D. the following terms and conditions: 13 14 applications for licensure shall be upon (1)15 forms furnished by the board and shall be accompanied by the 16 required fee; 17 the crematory shall be maintained at a (2) 18 specific location, including a funeral, commercial or direct 19 disposition establishment, primarily devoted to the practice 20 allowed for a crematory and shall comply with the following 21 minimum requirements: 22 (a) for a crematory that performs 23 traditional cremation: 1) a room shall be present with 24 necessary ventilation for housing a cremation retort; [(b)] 2) 25 a cremation retort shall be present for cremating dead human .229189.1 - 16 -

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1	bodies; and [(c)] <u>3)</u> a unit to pulverize cremated dead human
2	bodies shall be present; and
3	(b) for a crematory that performs
4	nontraditional cremation: 1) a room shall be present that
5	houses the necessary appliances, containers and machinery for
6	performing alkaline hydrolysis or natural organic reduction;
7	and 2) the necessary supplies shall be maintained for safely
8	handling unembalmed dead human bodies; and
9	(3) no license shall be issued or renewed by
10	the board unless the crematory is in compliance with the
11	Funeral Services Act and board rules.
12	E. The board may adopt by rule additional
13	requirements in the interest of public health, safety and
14	welfare."
15	SECTION 5. Section 61-32-19 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1993,
16	Chapter 204, Section 19, as amended) is amended to read:
17	"61-32-19. CREMATIONREQUIREMENTSRIGHT TO AUTHORIZE
18	CREMATIONDISPOSITION OF CREMAINS
19	A. No cremation shall be performed until all
20	necessary documentation is obtained authorizing the cremation.
21	B. An adult person may authorize the person's own
22	cremation and the lawful disposition of the person's cremains
23	by:
24	(1) stating the person's desire to be cremated
25	in a written statement that is signed by the person and
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notarized or witnessed by two other persons; or

2 including an express statement in the (2) 3 person's will indicating that the testator desired that the 4 testator's remains be cremated upon the testator's death; and 5 (3) specifying in the written or express 6 statement the type of cremation intended by the authorization. 7 C. A personal representative acting pursuant to the Uniform Probate Code or an establishment or crematory shall 8 9 comply with a statement made in accordance with the provisions 10 of this section. A statement that conforms to the provisions of this section authorizes a personal representative, 11 12 establishment or crematory to cremate a decedent's remains, and 13 the permission of next of kin or any other person shall not be 14 required for such authorization. Statements dated prior to 15 June 18, 1993 shall be given effect if they meet this section's 16 requirements.

D. A personal representative, establishment or crematory acting in reliance upon a document executed pursuant to the provisions of this section, who has no actual notice of revocation or contrary indication, is presumed to be acting in good faith.

E. No establishment, crematory or employee of an establishment or crematory or other person that relies in good faith on a statement written pursuant to this section shall be subject to liability for cremating the remains in accordance .229189.1

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1 with the provisions of this section. The written authorization 2 is a complete defense to a cause of action by a person against 3 any other person acting in accordance with that authorization. 4 F. Except as provided in Subsection G of this 5 section, if a decedent has left no written instructions 6 regarding the disposition of the decedent's remains, the 7 following persons in the order listed shall determine the means 8 of disposition, not to be limited to cremation, of the remains 9 of the decedent: 10 the surviving spouse; (1)11 (2) a majority of the surviving adult children 12 of the decedent; the surviving parents of the decedent; 13 (3) 14 (4) a majority of the surviving siblings of 15 the decedent; 16 an adult person who has exhibited special (5) 17 care and concern for the decedent, who is aware of the 18 decedent's views and desires regarding the disposition of the 19 [decendent's] decedent's body and who is willing and able to 20 make a decision about the disposition of the decedent's body; 21 or 22 the adult person of the next degree of (6) 23 kinship in the order named by New Mexico law to inherit the 24 estate of the decedent. 25 If a decedent left no written instructions G. .229189.1

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1 regarding the disposition of the decedent's remains, died while 2 serving in any branch of the United States armed forces, the 3 United States reserve forces or the national guard and 4 completed a United States department of defense record of 5 emergency data form or its successor form, the person 6 authorized by the decedent to determine the means of 7 disposition on a United States department of defense record of 8 emergency data form shall determine the means of disposition, 9 not to be limited to cremation.

H. A licensed establishment or crematory shall keep an accurate record of all cremations performed and the place of disposition of the cremains for a period of not less than seven years.

I. Cremains may be disposed of by any licensed establishment, crematory authority, cemetery or person having the right to control the disposition of the cremains, or that person's agent, in a lawful manner.

J. Legal forms for cremation authorization shall provide that persons giving the authorization will hold harmless an establishment from any liability for disposing of unclaimed cremains in a lawful manner after a period of one year following the return of the cremains to the establishment."

SECTION 6. Section 61-32-19.1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1999, Chapter 284, Section 13, as amended) is amended to read: .229189.1 - 20 -

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1	"61-32-19.1. CREMATORYSCOPE OF PRACTICELIMITATIONS
2	A. The scope of practice of a crematory and its
3	crematory authority is limited to traditional and
4	nontraditional cremation of dead human bodies and pulverization
5	of cremains. A crematory and its crematory authority shall act
6	as an agent of licensed funeral, commercial or direct
7	disposition establishments and schools of medicine. A
8	crematory and its crematory authority may:
9	(1) engage in transportation of dead human
10	bodies to the crematory; and
11	(2) cremate dead human bodies and pulverize
12	cremains.
13	B. After completion of the cremation process, if a
14	crematory and its crematory authority have not been instructed
15	by its agent to return the cremains to the person that
16	initiated the cremation services contract or to arrange for the
17	interment, entombment or ennichement of the cremains, the
18	crematory authority shall return, or cause to be returned, the
19	cremains to the establishment no later than thirty days after
20	the date of cremation.
21	C. A crematory and its crematory authority shall
22	maintain a system or process that ensures that any dead human
23	body in the crematory's possession can be specifically
24	identified throughout all phases of the cremation process.
25	D. A crematory shall keep an accurate record of all

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cremations performed for a period of not less than seven years. The crematory and its crematory authority shall Ε. certify to the board that the crematory will not exceed the scope of practice allowed by law. A licensed crematory shall not engage in any F. activity not specifically permitted in this section." - 22 -.229189.1

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