

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 672

BY REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS

HUMAN REMAINS: Provides relative to rights and requirements of certain persons authorized to arrange the disposition of human remains

1 AN ACT
2 To amend and reenact R.S. 8:655(A), (B)(1), and (D) and R.S. 37:848(B), 876(A), (B), (D),
3 and (F), 877(B)(1)(a)(v) and (b)(ii), and 879(K) and to enact R.S. 8:655(E) and R.S.
4 37:855 and 876(G) and (H), relative to the disposing of human remains; to provide
5 for a change in priority of persons with respect to the right to control interment and
6 the authorized arrangement of cremation; to distinguish adult grandchildren as a
7 priority group of persons; to exclude any person charged with certain crimes against
8 the decedent from the right of interment; to allow the disposal of certain human
9 remains by certain assistants of certified embalmers; to provide for the right to
10 arrange funeral goods and services; to limit liability of certain persons with respect
11 to the arrangement of funeral goods and services; to require a majority relative to
12 certain surviving family members and the right to authorize cremation; to expressly
13 make certain military provisions applicable to cremation authorizations; to require
14 the attachment of declarations to cremation authorization forms; to exempt the
15 remains of certain fetuses with respect to provisions requiring identification of
16 human remains; to authorize a representative of a funeral establishment to deliver
17 cremated human remains to authorized persons; to authorize a legal entity to receive
18 cremated human remains; to require funeral establishments and cemetery authorities
19 to retain certain receipts; to provide for other clarifying changes; and to provide for
20 related matters.

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

2 Section 1. R.S. 8:655(A), (B)(1), and (D) are hereby amended and reenacted and
3 R.S. 8:655(E) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

4 §655. Right of disposing of remains; military personnel; limitation of liability

5 A. ~~The right to control interment, as defined in R.S. 8:1(26), of the remains~~
6 ~~of a deceased person, unless~~ Unless other specific directions have been given or the
7 designation of a specific person to control disposition has been made by the decedent
8 in the form of a written and notarized declaration, ~~vests in and devolves upon the~~
9 ~~following in the order named~~ the following persons, in the priority listed, have the
10 right to control interment, as defined in R.S. 8:1(26), of the remains of a deceased
11 person:

12 (1) The person designated to control disposition by the decedent in the form
13 of a written and notarized declaration.

14 ~~(1)(2)~~ (2) The surviving spouse, if there is no pending petition for divorce ~~has~~
15 ~~been~~ filed by either spouse prior to the death of the decedent spouse.

16 ~~(2)(3)~~ (3) A majority of the surviving adult children of the decedent, ~~not~~
17 ~~including grandchildren or other more remote descendants.~~

18 (4) A majority of the surviving adult grandchildren of the decedent.

19 ~~(3)(5)~~ (5) The surviving parents of the decedent.

20 ~~(4)(6)~~ (6) A majority of the surviving adult ~~brothers and sisters~~ siblings of the
21 decedent.

22 ~~(5)(7)~~ (7) A majority of the surviving adult persons respectively in the next
23 degrees of kindred as established in Civil Code Article 880 et seq.

24 B.(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection A of this Section, if ~~If~~
25 the decedent died in a manner described by 10 U.S.C. §1481 (a)(1) through (8) while
26 serving in any branch of the United States Armed Forces, the United States Reserve
27 Forces, or National Guard, and the decedent executed a United States Department
28 of Defense Record of Emergency Data, known as DD Form 93, or its successor form,
29 the right to control interment for the decedent shall devolve upon the Person

1 Authorized to Direct Disposition, also referred to as the PADD, as indicated on the
2 DD Form 93 or its successor form.

3 * * *

4 D. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection A of this Section, in ~~in~~ the
5 event that the coroner releases the remains of the decedent to an interested person
6 pursuant to R.S. 9:1551(A)(1), such person ~~shall have~~ has the right to control the
7 disposition of the remains of the decedent.

8 E. Any person charged with first or second degree murder or voluntary
9 manslaughter in connection with the decedent's death forfeits the right to control
10 interment, and such right shall pass to the remaining persons in the priority listed in
11 Subsection A of this Section.

12 Section 2. R.S. 37:848(B), 876(A), (B), (D), and (F), 877(B)(1)(a)(v) and (b)(ii), and
13 879(K) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 37:855 and 876(G) and (H) are hereby
14 enacted to read as follows:

15 §848. Unlawful practice

16 B. Every member of a firm or corporation engaged in the practice of the
17 science of embalming or the business of funeral directing, or both, and the manager
18 of each place of business conducted by such firm or corporation, whose duties
19 engage him directly in the care and preparation, or the supervision of the disposal,
20 burial or disinterment of dead human bodies, shall possess a certificate issued under
21 the provisions of this Chapter. ~~No such firm or corporation shall permit an assistant~~
22 ~~who is not a certified embalmer under the provisions of this Chapter to care for or~~
23 ~~prepare for burial or transportation, the body of any person who has died of a~~
24 ~~communicable disease.~~

25 * * *

26 §855. Right to arrange funeral goods and services

27 A. The persons in the priority listed in R.S. 8:655 have the right to arrange
28 with a funeral director or funeral establishment for funeral goods and services, as

1 defined in R.S. 37:831(45), in preparation for the disposition of the remains of a
2 decedent.

3 B. There is no liability for a funeral director, funeral establishment, or any
4 respective employees for following the directions or relying on the representation of
5 a person representing himself to be the person who has the prior right to arrange the
6 funeral goods and services for the remains of a decedent in accordance with
7 Subsection A of this Section.

8 * * *

9 §876. Authorizing agent; notarized declarations

10 A. The following persons, in the priority listed, ~~shall~~ have the right to serve
11 as an authorizing agent for cremation ~~unless other specific directions have been~~
12 ~~given by the decedent in the form of a written and notarized declaration:~~

13 (1) Any person arranging the cremation, if the decedent has given specific
14 directions in the form of a written and notarized declaration providing for disposition
15 of his remains by cremation.

16 (2) The person designated to control disposition by the decedent in the form
17 of a written and notarized declaration.

18 ~~(1)(3)~~ The surviving spouse, if there is no pending petition for divorce ~~has~~
19 ~~been~~ filed by either spouse prior to the death of the decedent spouse.

20 ~~(2) At~~ (4) A majority of the surviving adult children of the decedent, ~~not~~
21 ~~including grandchildren or other more remote descendants.~~

22 (5) A majority of the surviving adult grandchildren of the decedent.

23 ~~(3)(6)~~ The surviving parents of the decedent.

24 ~~(4) At~~ (7) A majority of the surviving adult siblings of the decedent.

25 ~~(5) At~~ (8) A majority of the surviving adult persons respectively in the next
26 degree of kindred as provided in Civil Code Articles 880 et seq.

27 B. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection A of this Section, if ~~If~~ the
28 coroner releases the remains of a decedent to an interested person pursuant to R.S.
29 9:1551(A)(1), such person may serve as the authorizing agent for cremation.

1 * * *

2 D. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection A of this Section, in ~~in~~ the
3 case of those individuals whose disposition is the responsibility of the state or any
4 of its instrumentalities, a public administrator, medical examiner, coroner,
5 state-appointed guardian, or any other public official charged with arranging the
6 disposition of the decedent may serve as the authorizing agent.

7 * * *

8 F.(1) If the decedent died in a manner described by 10 U.S.C. §1481 (a)(1)
9 through (8) while serving in any branch of the United States Armed Forces, the
10 United States Reserve Forces, or National Guard, and the decedent executed a United
11 States Department of Defense Record of Emergency Data, known as DD Form 93,
12 or its successor form, the right to serve as an authorizing agent for cremation shall
13 devolve upon the Person Authorized to Direct Disposition, also referred to as the
14 PADD, as indicated on the DD Form 93 or its successor form.

15 (2) There is no liability for a cemetery authority, funeral establishment,
16 funeral director, crematory authority, or the employees or agents of any of them to
17 whom a copy of a DD Form 93 is presented, purportedly executed by the decedent
18 for conduction of a cremation of the decedent's remains, pursuant to the instructions
19 of the PADD as indicated on the DD Form 93, or for relying on the representation
20 of the PADD that the decedent died in a manner described in Paragraph (1) of this
21 Subsection.

22 G.(1) In the event that the decedent has made multiple notarized declarations
23 of disposition pursuant to Subsection A of this Section, the last notarized declaration
24 shall control.

25 (2) In the event that the decedent has made one or more notarized
26 declarations of interment pursuant to Subsection A of this Section, and the decedent
27 executed a DD Form 93 and died in a manner described in Subsection F of this
28 Section, the declaration or the DD Form 93, whichever is dated last, shall control the
29 right to serve as an authorizing agent for cremation.

1 H. Any person charged with first or second degree murder or voluntary
 2 manslaughter in connection with the decedent's death forfeits the right to serve as an
 3 authorizing agent, and such right shall pass to the remaining persons in the priority
 4 listed in Subsection A of this Section.

5 §877. Authorization to arrange cremation; authorization to cremate; refusal to
 6 arrange a cremation; refusal to cremate

7 * * *

8 B. A crematory authority shall have authority to cremate human remains
 9 when they are delivered by the funeral establishment and upon receipt of all of the
 10 following:

11 * * *

12 (1)(a) A cremation authorization form signed by an authorizing agent. Such
 13 form shall contain, at a minimum, the following information:

14 * * *

15 (v) A representation that the authorizing agent has the right to authorize the
 16 cremation of the decedent and that the authorizing agent is not aware of any living
 17 person who has a superior or equal priority to that of the authorizing agent. If the
 18 authorizing agent is acting pursuant to a written and notarized declaration made by
 19 the decedent, a copy of the declaration shall be attached to the cremation
 20 authorization form.

21 * * *

22 (b)

23 * * *

24 (ii) The cremation authorization form, other than preneed cremation forms,
 25 shall also be signed by a funeral director of the funeral establishment arranging the
 26 cremation. The funeral director shall not be responsible for any of the
 27 representations made by the authorizing agent, unless the individual has actual
 28 knowledge to the contrary. However, the information requested by Item (a)(i) of this
 29 Paragraph shall be considered to be a representation of the funeral director or funeral

1 establishment that the human remains delivered to the crematory authority have been
 2 identified as the decedent listed on the cremation authorization by the coroner
 3 pursuant to Item (b)(iii) of this Paragraph or positively identified after a viewing of
 4 the remains by a person who is the authorizing agent or a member of the class of
 5 which the authorizing agent is composed or a designated representative, ~~thereof~~
 6 unless the remains are from a spontaneous fetal death as defined in R.S. 40:32(16),
 7 in which case a viewing is not required. The information requested by Item (a)(iii)
 8 of this Paragraph shall be considered to be a representation of the funeral director or
 9 funeral establishment of any information received by the funeral director or funeral
 10 establishment pursuant to R.S. 40:1099.1.

11 * * *

12 §879. Cremation procedures; pacemakers; cremation retorts; refusal to accept a
 13 cremation container; unauthorized persons in crematory; simultaneous
 14 cremation of the human remains of multiple persons; cremation residue;
 15 packaging and delivery of cremated human remains

16 * * *

17 K. Cremated human remains shall be made available by the funeral ~~director~~
 18 establishment or the crematory authority to the ~~individual~~ person or legal entity
 19 specified on the cremation authorization form. ~~The funeral director or A~~
 20 representative of the funeral establishment or crematory authority and the ~~individual~~
 21 person or representative of the legal entity receiving the cremated human remains
 22 shall sign a receipt indicating the name of the deceased, the date, time, and place of
 23 the receipt, and any other information set out in the rules and regulations governing
 24 crematories. ~~The crematory authority shall retain a copy of the receipt~~ A copy of
 25 the receipt shall be retained by the funeral establishment or crematory authority
 26 whose respective representative signs the receipt. After this delivery, the cremated
 27 human remains may be transported in any manner in this state, with a copy of the
 28 burial-transit permit, and disposed of in accordance with the provisions of this
 29 Chapter.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 672 Original

2016 Regular Session

Davis

Abstract: Makes changes to law applicable to the disposition of human remains.

Present law provides for the priority of certain persons in determining the disposition of human remains. The priority listed in present law is as follows:

- (1) The surviving spouse, if no petition for divorce has been filed by either spouse prior to the death of the decedent spouse.
- (2) A majority of the surviving adult children of the decedent, not including grandchildren or other more remote descendants.
- (3) The surviving parents of the decedent.
- (4) A majority of the surviving adult brothers and sisters of the decedent.
- (5) A majority of the adult persons respectively in the next degrees of kin as established in present law (C.C. Art. 880 et seq).

Proposed law changes present law to provide as a preference, prior to the surviving spouse, the person designated to control disposition by the decedent in the form of a written and notarized declaration.

Present law authorizes a surviving spouse as a priority group of persons if the surviving spouse did not file a petition for divorce prior to the decedent's death. Proposed law clarifies present law to provide that a filed petition is a pending petition.

Proposed law adds adult grandchildren as a priority group of persons. Clarifies that a majority of the adult persons in the next degrees of kin are survivors of the decedent.

Proposed law provides that persons charged with 1st or 2nd degree murder or voluntary manslaughter in connection with the decedent's death are forfeited the right to control interment, including cremation authorization. Further provides that the control of interment and cremation authority will be passed to the remaining persons in the priority listed in present law and proposed law.

Proposed law deletes a present law provision prohibiting assistants not certified as embalmers from preparing the bodies of persons deceased from a communicable disease.

Proposed law provides that persons, in the priority listed in present law and proposed law, have the right to arrange with a funeral director or funeral establishment, the funeral goods and services regarding the remains of a decedent. Exempts a funeral director, funeral establishment, or respective employees from liability for following the directions or relying on the representation of a person who purports to have the preferential right to arrange for funeral goods and services.

Present law provides for the priority of certain persons to serve as an authorizing agent for cremation of a decedent's remains. The priority listed in present law is as follows:

- (1) The surviving spouse, if no petition for divorce has been filed by either spouse prior to the death of the decedent spouse.
- (2) The surviving adult children of the decedent, not including grandchildren or other more remote descendants.
- (3) The surviving parents of the decedent.
- (4) The surviving adult brothers and sisters of the decedent.
- (5) The surviving adult persons respectively in the next degrees of kin as established in present law (C.C. Art. 880 et seq).

Proposed law changes present law to provide as a preference, prior to the surviving spouse, the following persons:

- (1) Any person arranging the cremation, if the decedent gave specific directions in the form of a written and notarized declaration providing for disposition of his remains by cremation.
- (2) The person designated to control disposition by the decedent in the form of a written and notarized declaration.

Proposed law further changes present law to require, with respect to the prioritized right to serve as an authorizing agent for cremation, a majority of the surviving adult children, a majority of the surviving adult siblings, and a majority of the surviving adult persons in the next degrees of kin to the decedent.

Present law requires funeral directors and crematory authorities to receive a written cremation authorization form from an authorizing agent. Further requires the authorization form to include information of the authorizing agent's representation that the agent has the right to authorize cremation, and that the agent is without knowledge of any living person who has a superior or equal priority to that of the authorizing agent.

Proposed law retains present law and further requires a copy of the decedent's written and notarized declaration to be attached to the cremation authorization form if the agent is acting pursuant to the declaration.

Present law provides certain provisions for military persons who died in a certain manner while having a written and notarized declaration of interment and a DD Form 93. Proposed law makes present law expressly applicable to interment by cremation.

Present law requires representation or positive identification made by certain persons that respective human remains are those of the decedent. Proposed law excludes from present law the human remains of fetuses deceased as the result of spontaneous fetal death.

Present law provides for a funeral director or representative of a crematory authority to deliver cremated human remains to authorized persons. Further requires a receipt to be signed by the respective funeral director or representative of a crematory authority and the authorized person receiving the cremated human remains.

Proposed law changes present law to authorize a representative of a funeral establishment to exchange in the delivery of cremated human remains. Authorizes a legal entity to receive cremated human remains. Requires retention of the signed delivery receipt by the funeral establishment or crematory authority whose respective representative signs the receipt.

(Amends R.S. 8:655(A), (B)(1), and (D) and R.S. 37:848(B), 876(A), (B), (D), and (F), 877(B)(1)(a)(v) and (b)(ii), and 879(K); Adds R.S. 8:655(E) and R.S. 37:855 and 876(G) and (H))