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## DIGEST

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HB 454 Original

2026 Regular Session

Butler

**Abstract:** Enacts the Gracey Claire Rushing Act which provides for the chain of custody for human remains and internal organs

Proposed law creates the "Gracey Claire Rushing Act".

Proposed law provides that the purpose of the law is to ensure transparency, accountability, and respect for the deceased and their families.

Proposed law defines "autopsy", "chain of custody report", "coroner", "decedent", "forensic pathologist", "funeral home", "major organs", and "viscera bag".

Proposed law provides for a chain of custody for the major organs of a decedent after an autopsy is performed. Requires the coroner to document the condition of the body with a comprehensive log which must include a detailed description of the state of the remains, observations of injuries, condition or anomalies, and photographs where appropriate.

Proposed law requires the coroner to transfer the body to a forensic pathologist along with the comprehensive log. Requires the pathologist to document all procedures including any biopsy or sample taken, a detailed list of organs removed, placement of the organs in a viscera bag and for any organ retained, a document which explains the justification for retention, an expected duration of retention, and notification procedures to the next of kin.

Proposed law requires the pathologist to return the body to the funeral home or designated recipient. Requires that the pathologist place the viscera bag within the abdominal cavity of the body. Further requires a chain-of-custody report which must include verification that all major organs are accounted for.

Proposed law requires the funeral home to remove the viscera bag, inventory the contents, verify the inventory by the pathologist, report any discrepancies to the pathologist and coroner for resolution, and document the resolution in an updated chain of custody report.

Proposed law provides that upon request, the next of kin shall receive a copy of the chain of custody report and autopsy findings.

Proposed law requires the coroner to maintain all chain of custody reports for 10 years. Provides for penalties and disciplinary actions for failure to comply.

Proposed law requires the La. Dept. of Health to promulgate rules in accordance with the APA to implement the requirements of proposed law and to develop a standardized form for chain-of-custody reports and organ inventories.

Eff. Jan. 1, 2027.

(Adds R.S. 25:960)