

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1253 (Substitute for House Bill No. 454 by Representative Butler)

BY REPRESENTATIVES BUTLER, ADAMS, AMEDEE, BACALA, BAYHAM, BERAULT, BILLINGS, BOUDREAUX, BOYD, BOYER, BROUSSARD, CARRIER, ROBBY CARTER, WILFORD CARTER, CARVER, CHASSION, CHENEVERT, COATES, DEVILLIER, DEWITT, DICKERSON, DOMANGUE, EGAN, FISHER, FREIBERG, GEYMANN, GLORIOSO, GREEN, HEBERT, HILFERTY, HORTON, ILLG, JACKSON, JORDAN, KERNER, LACOMBE, LAFLEUR, JACOB LANDRY, TERRY LANDRY, LYONS, MARTINEZ, MILLER, MOORE, NEWELL, OWEN, SCHAMERHORN, SCHLEGEL, SPELL, ST. BLANC, TAYLOR, VILLIO, WALTERS, WILDER, WYBLE, AND YOUNG AND SENATORS BARROW, BASS, CLOUD, DUPLESSIS, EDMONDS, HENRY, JACKSON-ANDREWS, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MIGUEZ, AND PRESSLY

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 44:19(E)(4), relative to the treatment of human remains; to  
3 provide for death investigation documentation requirements for human remains and  
4 internal organs; to provide for the content of autopsy reports in accounting for the  
5 treatment of human remains; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for  
6 related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 44:19(E)(4) is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

9 §19. Records of a coroner; autopsy photographs, video, and other visual images

10 \* \* \*

11 E. Coroner death investigation documents shall include the following:

12 \* \* \*

13 (4) A post-mortem forensic medical examination report, referred to as the  
14 "autopsy report", may include an external examination only, an external examination  
15 with toxicology, toxicology only, or an autopsy with supporting laboratory  
16 evaluation. The post-mortem forensic medical examination report is a document that  
17 is the work product of the coroner that contains the name of the decedent, address,  
18 date of birth, age, sex, and race of the decedent, date and time of death, place of  
19 death, date and time of autopsy, when applicable, name of the doctor performing the  
20 autopsy and names of all persons present at the autopsy, and information regarding

1 the autopsy, including whether the autopsy was requested or performed by operation  
 2 of law, a listing of the physical findings of the autopsy, a summary in narrative form  
 3 of the medical findings and conclusions, toxicology, histology, and radiology  
 4 findings, when applicable, and the cause and manner of death. The post-mortem  
 5 forensic medical examination report shall document any organs of the deceased  
 6 retained pursuant to R.S. 13:5713(B)(4)(b). The post-mortem forensic medical  
 7 examination report is not a public document except as provided in Paragraph (6) of  
 8 this Subsection, or if ordered opened to the public by a court of competent  
 9 jurisdiction. However, it shall be made available at no charge to the appropriate law  
 10 enforcement agencies as requested and is subject to subpoena. The coroner shall  
 11 provide one copy of this document upon request by the spouse, parent, sibling, child,  
 12 grandchild, niece, nephew, aunt, or uncle of the decedent, or the next of kin pursuant  
 13 to R.S. 8:655(A) and one copy of this document upon request by the decedent's  
 14 physician. The provisions of this Paragraph shall not apply to the medical records  
 15 of the decedent or any records generated by any public entity other than the coroner  
 16 and those records shall be obtained from the entity generating them in accordance  
 17 with other applicable provisions of law.

\* \* \*

19 Section 2. This Act shall become effective on January 1, 2027.

20 Section 3. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Gracey Claire Rushing  
 21 Act" in memory of a young child whose passing in 2009 highlighted the need for improved  
 22 safeguards in the treatment of decedents' remains.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_