

ASSEMBLY REGULATED PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3260

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

The Assembly Regulated Professions Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 3260.

As amended, this bill modifies current law regarding unclaimed dead bodies. Specifically, a county is given the option under the bill to cremate an unclaimed dead body and is assigned responsibility for payment of the cremation. The bill stipulates that cremains are to be retained by a medical examiner's office for at least one year from the date of the cremation. After one year, the cremains may be interred. Additionally, the bill updates current law by deeming a dead body as unclaimed if, after 30 days from the time the body is identified pronounced deceased, whichever is later: (1) no next of kin is identified or located; (2) next of kin fails to respond to notice after being identified and located; (3) all next of kin, other than those addressed in current law, decline to claim possession of the dead body; or (4) any other person who is authorized under current law to claim the dead body declines to do so. Lastly, if an individual makes a valid claim to a body or cremains already interred, the individual is to incur the cost of the disinterment. If the medical examiner needs to conduct an investigation on an unclaimed dead body or cremains already interred, any disinterment is to be paid for by the medical examiner. As amended, the bill defines "unclaimed dead body" to mean all or part of a dead human being that is not identified, located, or claimed.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

(1) clarify that a body is to be deemed unclaimed after 30 days before burial or cremation under certain circumstances;

(2) require an unclaimed dead body to be buried by a morgue keeper at the expense of the county or cremated at the expense of the county;

(3) stipulate that cremains are to be retained by a medical examiner for at least one year from the date of cremation and may be interred after one year;

(4) require cost of disinterment, if necessary, be paid by an individual who makes a valid claim to cremains or a body after interment;

(5) specify that cost of a disinterment is to be paid by the medical examiner if the examiner is to conduct an investigation on an unclaimed dead body already buried or whose cremains are interred;

(6) define “unclaimed dead body;” and

(7) make technical updates.