



**THE INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, INC.**

Post Office Box 64064
Washington, DC 20029-4064

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
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July 12, 1999

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Dear Sir/Madam:

The Independent Funeral Directors Association, of the District of Columbia, Inc., are hereby submitting our response to 16 CFR Part 453 The Federal Trade Commission Request for Comments Concerning Trade Regulation Rule on Funeral Industry Practices.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (202) 843-6412.

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Sincerely,

(Ms.) Billie Watson Hughes.
Secretary

Delegates to the House of Representatives

- David G. Jordan**
- E'Lois G. Waller**

Responses to the Federal Trade Commission's Request for Comments Concerning the Trade Regulation Rule on Funeral Industry Practices

16 CFR Part 453

The Members of the Independent Funeral Directors Association of the District of Columbia, Inc. would like to file their comments on various aspects of the FTC's request for response.

- The proposed change in the definition of provider
- A continued ban on casket handling fees
- The removal of non-declinable fees
- The difficulties that providers have in complying with the Rule

As an organization in existence for 65 years, we have seen a multitude of changes in the funeral industry. Members were asked to give their comments to the survey. Due to the breadth of the survey we urged members to specifically look at those areas of greatest concern to them as funeral home owners. The following is a compilation of those responses.

Definition of Provider

"The Rule" defines a funeral provider as any person, partnership, or corporation that sells or offers to sell funeral goods and funeral services to the public."

The funeral service industry has undergone drastic changes, and this definition is no longer adequate to encompass all of those who provide goods and services. It is our opinion that the Rule needs to be expanded to include all those who sell funeral goods and services, which have in the past been sold only by funeral homes. There is not only a need to expand the Rule, but to make it's content applicable to all providers of funeral goods and services. Those who could come under the domain of the Rule in the future would include but not be limited to:

- cemeteries
- memorial and cremation societies
- casket stores
- others who enter in the sale of funeral goods.

In effect, IFDA members want to level the playing field so that all providers of funeral services and goods will regulated. The consumer will also benefit from this consistency in regulating all who sell funeral goods and services. If the initial intent of the Rule was to

laws, and then decide what compliance means for them at the junction of state, local and federal interpretations. Our membership is composed of providers from the District as well as Maryland and Virginia. Many small providers consequently put their businesses in jeopardy because of the various interpretations of the Rule. Our members would like to suggest that the FTC work with state regulatory boards to publish a simplified Rule book written in layman's language and made available for all providers of funeral goods and services as well as the general public.