



Catholic Conference
of Illinois

65 E. Wacker Place
Suite 1620
Chicago, IL 60601
Ph. 312-368-1066
Fx. 312-368-1090

108 E. Cook St.
Springfield, IL 62704
Ph. 217-528-9200
Fx. 217-528-7214

www.ilcatholic.org
Diocese of Belleville
Archdiocese of Chicago
Diocese of Joliet
Diocese of Peoria
Diocese of Rockford
Diocese of Springfield-in-IL

Oppose House Bill 3158 on Human Composting

Human composting or Natural Organic Reduction is a process whereby the deceased is placed on a bed of soil in addition to the application of chemicals that results in a rapid decomposition of the human body. What is left are human remains in a bed of soil that weighs approximately 1,600 lbs. In the House Energy and Environment Committee, the Catholic Conference of Illinois expressed concerns about this legislation not affording proper respect to the deceased as it treats a human person as vegetable trimmings or other compost material, not as a person with dignity.

There are also significant public policy concerns that should be addressed including the following:

- 1) Allows the indigent to be made human compost without their consent.

HB 3158 gives “institutions of medical, mortuary, or other sciences” that receive indigent remains as donations to science under the Disposition of the Remains of the Indigent Act (“Indigent Act”) the legal authority to have those bodies composted – completely without the consent of the decedent or the family. The indigent, poor, and most marginalized deserve to rest in peace.

Today, after use of the remains, the qualified medical science institution cremates the body. Then, the person’s remains are delivered to the appropriate family member empowered to direct the disposition of the decedent’s cremated human remains. If no such person is available or if such person is unwilling to accept the remains, the qualified medical science institution inters the cremated human remains at a cemetery.

- 2) Given the large volume and heavy weight of soil produced and the practical difficulty for families to claim and transport such mass, we fear abandonment will become commonplace. Will this lead to unregulated locations for disposition of the composted remains? If one delivers to their home, is this disclosed upon sale of the home?
- 3) It is worth noting that the legislation calls for a five-year license fee of only \$250. Is this small amount sufficient for the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to test the soil to ensure its safety?

Please oppose House Bill 3158.