

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS

January 7, 2025

AND JANICE HAHN

Compassion and Equity - Elimination of the Medical Examiner’s Transportation and Storage Fee for Los Angeles County Residents

The loss of a loved one can be one of the most difficult and traumatic moments in people’s lives. Unfortunately, it can also be a financially stressful period for individuals as they seek to lay their loved ones to rest. Prior to 2019, the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner (DME) required a transportation and storage fee of \$400 to transport the body of the deceased from the place of death to the DME where bodies undergo an examination. The DME transportation and storage fee was one of the many, often unexpected, expenses incurred from the loss of a loved one.

As a result, on March 19, 2024, the Board unanimously approved a motion to instruct the Chief Medical Examiner, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer, to identify and provide funding to waive transportation and storage fees for all County residents during a 180-day assessment period. The Chief Medical Examiner was directed to collect data, including demographic information, to assess and evaluate

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need and impact; and report back to the Board with collected data, recommendations, and relevant implementation plans, on the future of DME's transportation and storage fees.

The report back verified that the burden of transportation and storage fees disproportionately impacts low-income communities, many of whom are also people of color. The Chief Medical Examiner and the Chief Executive Office successfully identified funding for the duration of the pilot program to the end of the current fiscal year. It is the recommendation of the Chief Medical Examiner to waive transportation and storage fees indefinitely.

The County should do what it can to practice compassion and equity by easing the financial burden of laying loved ones to rest with dignity.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office, in collaboration with the Department of Medical Examiner, to identify ongoing funding to permanently eliminate transportation and storage fees for all County residents.

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