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Chairman Peterson and to the rest of the Senate Transportation committee--

I come as a proponent to SB 131. At the beginning of session, Rep Collins spoke to me about his interest in reintroducing this bill. I initially introduced HB2608 in the 2019-2020 session. I was inspired by my Uncle's military funeral that year. He was interred into a National Cemetery with honors, having served in Vietnam and many years of service.

As part of his funeral, we were in a procession from the funeral home to the cemetery as is normal. We had the benefit during the funeral procession of having former military escorts, in this case a group known as the Patriot Guard motorcycle riders. They conducted themselves professionally and truly aided the procession by managing some of the traffic so the procession could maintain its integrity and give due honors to the fallen veteran.

After this experience, I was surprised that thirty states have statutes related to and recognizing funeral processions. Kansas does not. In other words, processions commonly have to ignore traffic stop signs and sometimes the procession goes through stop lights. If a car were to hit one of these escort volunteers, or any vehicle for that matter, the vehicles in the procession could be at fault just because they were technically breaking the law...all because the law does not currently recognize funeral processions in statute.

This bill merely about putting something in our statutes that at a minimum recognizes that, when properly marked, those conducting traffic on behalf of the funeral procession are doing so within the law. We should do something to formally put protections in place for those helping our heroes.

Note that SB131 is not identical to the bill I introduced last session in the House (which has been reintroduced as HB 2107). In this version I have removed the traffic fines imposed for those not giving due respect by pulling to the side of the road during a funeral procession. I have done this to give leadership an option where they seemed to have an issue last session, and get the rest of this passed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Senator Jeff Pittman SD #5