



# AB 528 (Irwin) Human and Pet Co-Burial

## SUMMARY

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AB 528 will allow pet remains to be buried in the same plot as their owner's remains when their time by their owner's side comes to a natural end.

## BACKGROUND

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Existing law establishes the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (Bureau) to regulate nearly every aspect of the licensed cemetery and funeral industries, including pet cemeteries. The Bureau currently licenses, regulates, and investigates complaints against approximately 13,500 licensees in categories that include: funeral establishments, funeral directors, embalmers, and crematories.

While there is no federal legislation that allows for the co-burial of humans and pets, various states have begun to recognize the increasing desire for co-burial. As of this year, New York, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Florida have enacted similar legislation that allows families to have the flexibility in choosing whether their pet's final resting place will be by their side.

## NEED FOR THE BILL

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Nearly 16 million Californians own a pet, integrating their furry family members into their daily activities. A 2017 NPR opinion piece acknowledged that co-burials were not uncommon in various cultures throughout human history. With co-burial allowing pet owners to properly express their love and connection with their pets, while keeping their furry family members by their side in the afterlife.

California's Health and Safety Code restricts public and private cemeteries to only burying human remains through traditional casket burial in ground or by cremation. As a result, California has around a dozen pet cemeteries across the state where owners are able to memorialize their beloved pets. However, pet burial laws in the state are ambiguous and nonexistent for pet owners who would like to be buried alongside their pet.

## THIS BILL

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AB 528 would amend the Business and Professions code to authorize a public or private cemetery to allow for the co-burial of deceased humans and their deceased pets.

Specifically, a public or private cemetery would be allowed to:

- Designate a separate, clearly marked section of the cemetery for human and pet co-burials
- Require that the pet and human remains be buried in separate urns or coffins
- Have the pet and human remains be buried in the same plot, niche, crypt, or vault.

By allowing for the co-burial of deceased humans and their deceased pets, AB 528 will provide families with the opportunity to keep their furry family members close to them in death, just as they were in life.

## CONTACT

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