

March 15, 2011---A first-in-the nation California bill, [SB 658](#) , would require funeral homes to post their price lists online if the funeral home maintains a website. FCA has sent a [letter supporting the bill](#)

I. Online funeral pricing is long overdue; the majority of funeral homes (if they even have a website at all) do not post their prices online. Instead, they rely on website templates, often from casket companies, long on platitudes and short on specifics.

[Smith Family Funeral Home's website](#) is sadly typical:

Smith Family Funeral Homes understand that funerals allow us to pay special tribute to a unique life and permit us to preserve the memories of a loved one's impact on our world. We believe that every funeral service deserves to be truly memorable, flawlessly planned and correct to the smallest detail. That's why no detail is too great or too small when it comes to personalizing an appropriate tribute for a loved one.

That sounds very nice indeed, and the Smiths may be a genuinely compassionate family. But there's nary a price to be found on their site, nor any specifics about the multiple options available to families from simple cremation to a full-service wake and funeral. In other words, the site is one big soft-focus ad useless to the online shopper.

We hope California's SB 658 will pass and set an example for the rest of the country. Online price and service comparison is the norm today, and it's time the funeral industry stopped being an anachronism and joined the rest of the online retail world.

Huge hat-tip to Ed Howard, Senior Counsel at the [Center for Public Interest Law](#) at the University of San Diego. Mr. Howard convinced a lawmaker to introduce this important bill.