

2008 Legislative

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Well, as the new year begins so does this year's Florida Legislative Session. As you know FFCCA is one of the members of the "Coalition" that meets to discuss and review various Legislative Issues that any of its members bring to the table and this year is no exception. Items that have been discussed to date include:

- 1) Increasing the documentation needed to sell scrap bronze, copper and steel memorials and statutes.
- 2) Increased penalties for being convicted of stealing and selling scrap bronze, copper and steal memorials, vases, statutes and items related to the Memorialization.
- 3) Limiting the local government's authority to take land by Eminent Domain to road expansion, transportation corridors, rights-of-way and only then after a public hearing and the determination that there are no reasonable alternatives.
- 4) Local Governments would be prohibited from requiring the transfer of dedicated cemetery property prior to July 1, 2007 as a condition for obtaining approval for any regulatory process to which the cemetery is subject.

All of the above have been approved by the Coalition to move forward and support as directed or requested.

For Members of the Southern the "Coalition" is made up of Funeral Home Associations, Consumers Groups, Monument Companies and Cemetery Associations. It is a loosely formed group to discuss legislation and regulatory issues prior to them becoming an issue for public consumption. We have used the Coalition to work on strategy and to meet with regulatory and public officials. It was through the Coalition that we were able to stop the purchase of a funeral business by Hospice a couple of years ago and to then pass legislation to prevent them from ever owning a funeral, or cemetery business in Florida.

And speaking of Hospice I would strongly recommend to the Members of Southern to become proactive and make sure each of your various states pass legislation that prohibits organizations like Hospice from ever owning, operating or managing a funeral home, cemetery or similar business.