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Law already says no grave robbing

(<http://www.southtownstar.com/news/opinion/editorials/1668259,071609editcemetery.article>)

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The issue: Officials are calling for strict new regulations mandating how cemeteries do business - and creating new government layers to carry out this task.

We say: We don't need more bureaucracy. We need prosecution of this crime.

Decaying bodies dumped in a jumbled heap. Grave robbery. Desecration. Injustice and greed.

The Burr Oak Cemetery scandal is the stuff nightmares are made of.

So ... there ought to be a law, right?

There ought to be rules and regulations and someone with a clipboard to enforce them.

That's what some state officials are proposing.

Illinois Comptroller Dan Hynes calls for a plan to give the state new and needed oversight concerning cemeteries. Plenty of legislators are clamoring for the same.

Translation: "This is appalling. This is bad. The public is calling for heads on a pike. We should ... DO SOMETHING!

Let's create new offices! New officials! New documents and processing systems! Let's pay for it all with new taxes and proudly proclaim we're leading the charge against this moral assault on our dearly departed, dead citizenry.

Except of course, grave robbing is already illegal.

It's time to step back here.

Such a stupid, likely isolated criminal scheme simply must not be allowed to create an entire squadron of cemetery functionaries - wandering with global positioning units to track the mostly peaceful, mostly quiet, grave sites of hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans.

Indeed, it's this kind of misguided thinking that has led Illinois state government into the bloated, fetid bureaucracy it has become.

"No one regulates, licenses or oversees the operations of a cemetery, how bodies are buried, what type of people are allowed to handle bodies," Hynes told the Chicago Sun-Times.

And that is true.

And that is because we do not cede our bodies to Cook County or the State of Illinois when our last breath is drawn.

Be it a church or a private corporation, most of us deposit our bones on private land - with no expectation that some sort of taxpayer guarantee is backing our eternal rest.

It's a hard thing to face for a politician: Sometimes they can't fix our problems. Sometimes they just need to stick their noses back where they belong.

Yes, officials have a role here - to prosecute wrongdoers.

Act immediately and decisively on tips of future or past cemetery crimes.

Set a clear example that illegal acts will be punished.

And last but not least - let the rest of the dead rest in peace.

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