

# SENATE BILL 147

J2, J1

(9lr1820)

## ENROLLED BILL

— Finance and Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs/Health and Government Operations —

Introduced by ~~Senator Klausmeier~~ Senators Klausmeier, Augustine, Beidle, Benson, Feldman, Hayes, Hershey, Jennings, Kelley, Kramer, Reilly, and Young

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President.

### CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning  
2 **Public Health – Disposition of Remains – Forfeiture or Waiver of Right of**  
3 **Disposition**  
4 FOR the purpose of adding an adult grandchild of a certain decedent to the list of persons  
5 who have the right to arrange for the final disposition of the body of the decedent;  
6 requiring a person to forfeit the right of final disposition of the body of a decedent  
7 and that the right pass to the next qualifying person under certain circumstances;  
8 providing that a certain person’s right of disposition may be restored under certain  
9 circumstances; authorizing a person to waive the right of final disposition and  
10 requiring the right to pass to the next qualifying person under certain circumstances;  
11 prohibiting funeral directors, morticians, and funeral establishments from being  
12 held civilly liable for acting in reliance on this Act; providing for the construction of

---

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.  
Underlining indicates amendments to bill.  
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.  
*Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.*



1 this Act; making conforming changes; and generally relating to the right of final  
2 disposition of the body of a decedent.

3 BY repealing and reenacting, ~~without~~ with amendments,  
4 Article – Health – General  
5 Section 5–509(c) and (d)  
6 Annotated Code of Maryland  
7 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

8 BY adding to  
9 Article – Health – General  
10 Section 5–509(g)  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

13 BY repealing and reenacting, ~~without~~ with amendments,  
14 Article – Health Occupations  
15 Section 7–410(c) and (d)  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

18 BY adding to  
19 Article – Health Occupations  
20 Section 7–410(g)  
21 Annotated Code of Maryland  
22 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

23 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
24 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

25 **Article – Health – General**

26 5–509.

27 (c) Unless a person has knowledge that contrary directions have been given by  
28 the decedent, if a decedent has not executed a document under subsection (a) of this section,  
29 the following persons, in the order of priority stated, have the right to arrange for the final  
30 disposition of the body of the decedent, including by cremation under § 5–502 of this  
31 subtitle:

32 (1) The surviving spouse or domestic partner of the decedent;

33 (2) An adult child of the decedent;

34 (3) A parent of the decedent;

35 (4) An adult brother or sister of the decedent;

1           **(5) AN ADULT GRANDCHILD OF THE DECEDENT;**

2           ~~(5)~~ **(6)**     A person acting as a representative of the decedent under a signed  
3 authorization of the decedent;

4           ~~(6)~~ **(7)**     The guardian of the person of the decedent at the time of the  
5 decedent's death, if one has been appointed; or

6           ~~(7)~~ **(8)**     In the absence of any person under items (1) through ~~(6)~~ **(7)** of this  
7 subsection, any other person willing to assume the responsibility to act as the authorizing  
8 agent for purposes of arranging the final disposition of the decedent's body, including the  
9 personal representative of the decedent's estate, after attesting in writing that a good faith  
10 effort has been made to no avail to contact the individuals under items (1) through ~~(6)~~ **(7)**  
11 of this subsection.

12           (d)   (1)   Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, if a decedent has more than  
13 one survivor under subsection (c)(1) through [(4)] **(5)** of this section, any adult child, parent,  
14 ~~or~~ adult brother or sister, **OR ADULT GRANDCHILD** of the decedent who confirms in writing  
15 to a practitioner that all of the other members of the same class have been notified may  
16 serve as the authorizing agent for purposes of § 5-502 of this subtitle unless the practitioner  
17 receives a written objection to the cremation from another member of that class within 24  
18 hours.

19           (2)   If a decedent has more than one survivor under subsection (c)(1)  
20 through [(4)] **(5)** of this section, the majority of a class may serve as the authorizing agent.

21           **(G) (1) THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE A**  
22 **LICENSED MORTICIAN, LICENSED FUNERAL DIRECTOR, OR LICENSED FUNERAL**  
23 **ESTABLISHMENT TO MAKE ANY NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE RIGHT OF**  
24 **DISPOSITION.**

25           **(2) A PERSON SHALL FORFEIT THE RIGHT OF FINAL DISPOSITION OF**  
26 **THE BODY OF A DECEDENT UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION AND THE**  
27 **RIGHT SHALL PASS TO THE NEXT QUALIFYING PERSON, IF THE PERSON:**

28           **(I) DOES NOT EXERCISE THE RIGHT OF DISPOSITION WITHIN ~~3~~**  
29 **7 DAYS AFTER NOTIFICATION BY A FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEATH OF THE**  
30 **DECEDENT, OR WITHIN ~~4~~ 10 DAYS AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DEATH, WHICHEVER IS**  
31 **EARLIER;**

32           ~~**(II) IS THE SPOUSE OF THE DECEDENT AND A PETITION TO**~~  
33 ~~**DISSOLVE THE MARRIAGE IS PENDING IN A COURT AT THE TIME OF THE DECEDENT'S**~~  
34 ~~**DEATH; OR**~~



1 (3) A parent of the decedent;

2 (4) An adult brother or sister of the decedent;

3 **(5) AN ADULT GRANDCHILD OF THE DECEDENT;**

4 ~~(5)~~ **(6)** A person acting as a representative of the decedent under a signed  
5 authorization of the decedent;

6 ~~(6)~~ **(7)** The guardian of the person of the decedent at the time of the  
7 decedent's death, if a guardian has been appointed; or

8 ~~(7)~~ **(8)** In the absence of any person under items (1) through ~~(6)~~ **(7)** of this  
9 subsection, any other person willing to assume the responsibility to act as the authorizing  
10 agent for purposes of arranging the final disposition of the decedent's body, including the  
11 personal representative of the decedent's estate, after attesting in writing that a good faith  
12 effort has been made to no avail to contact the persons described in items (1) through ~~(6)~~  
13 **(7)** of this subsection.

14 (d) (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, if a decedent has more than  
15 one survivor under subsection (c)(1) through [(4)] (5) of this section, any adult child, parent,  
16 ~~or~~ adult brother or sister, **OR ADULT GRANDCHILD** of the decedent who confirms in writing  
17 to a licensee that all of the other members of the same class have been notified may serve  
18 as the authorizing agent unless the licensee receives a written objection from another  
19 member of that class.

20 (2) If a decedent has more than one survivor under subsection (c)(1)  
21 through [(4)] (5) of this section, the majority of a class may serve as the authorizing agent.

22 (G) (1) **THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE A**  
23 **LICENSED MORTICIAN, LICENSED FUNERAL DIRECTOR, OR LICENSED FUNERAL**  
24 **ESTABLISHMENT TO MAKE ANY NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE RIGHT OF FINAL**  
25 **DISPOSITION OF THE BODY OF A DECEDENT.**

26 (2) **A PERSON SHALL FORFEIT THE RIGHT OF FINAL DISPOSITION OF**  
27 **THE BODY OF A DECEDENT UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION AND THE**  
28 **RIGHT SHALL PASS TO THE NEXT QUALIFYING PERSON, IF THE PERSON:**

29 (I) **DOES NOT EXERCISE THE RIGHT OF DISPOSITION WITHIN ~~3~~**  
30 **7 DAYS AFTER NOTIFICATION BY A FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEATH OF THE**  
31 **DECEDENT, OR WITHIN ~~4~~ 10 DAYS AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DEATH, WHICHEVER IS**  
32 **EARLIER;**

1 ~~(H) IS THE SPOUSE OF THE DECEDENT AND A PETITION TO~~  
 2 ~~DISSOLVE THE MARRIAGE IS PENDING IN A COURT AT THE TIME OF THE DECEDENT'S~~  
 3 ~~DEATH; OR~~

4 ~~(H) (II)~~ (II) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, IS  
 5 CHARGED WITH FIRST- OR SECOND-DEGREE MURDER OR VOLUNTARY  
 6 MANSLAUGHTER IN CONNECTION WITH THE DECEDENT'S DEATH AND THE CHARGES  
 7 ARE KNOWN TO THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR; OR

8 (III) IS THE SUBJECT OF AN ACTIVE INTERIM, TEMPORARY, OR  
 9 FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER AND THE DECEDENT WAS A PERSON ELIGIBLE FOR  
 10 RELIEF, AS DEFINED UNDER § 4-501 OF THE FAMILY LAW ARTICLE, UNDER THE  
 11 ORDER, AND A COPY OF THE ORDER IS PRESENTED TO THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR.

12 (3) ~~UNLESS FINAL DISPOSITION HAS ALREADY OCCURRED, A A~~  
 13 PERSON WHOSE RIGHT OF DISPOSITION WAS FORFEITED UNDER PARAGRAPH ~~(2)(H)~~  
 14 (2)(I) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT RESTORED, IF:

15 (I) THE CRIMINAL CHARGES ARE DISMISSED; OR

16 (II) THE PERSON IS ACQUITTED OF THE CRIMINAL CHARGES.

17 (4) A PERSON MAY WAIVE THE RIGHT OF FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE  
 18 BODY OF A DECEDENT UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION AND THE RIGHT  
 19 SHALL PASS TO THE NEXT QUALIFYING PERSON, IF:

20 (I) THE PERSON WAIVES THE RIGHT OF DISPOSITION IN  
 21 WRITING; AND

22 (II) THE WRITING IS SUBMITTED TO THE PRACTITIONER OR  
 23 FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

24 (5) A LICENSED MORTICIAN, LICENSED FUNERAL DIRECTOR, OR  
 25 LICENSED FUNERAL ESTABLISHMENT MAY NOT BE HELD CIVILLY LIABLE FOR  
 26 ACTING IN RELIANCE ON THIS SUBSECTION.

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
 28 October 1, 2019.