



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 476

DATE: February 6, 2024

SPONSOR: Delegate Bartlett, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Judiciary

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT (Department of Police)

Criminal Procedure – Forensic Genetic Genealogical DNA Analysis and Search – Applicability for Deceased and Missing Children

House Bill 476 provides for the use of forensic genetic genealogical DNA analysis and search (FGGS) by law enforcement in identifying a deceased or missing individual under the age of 18. The Montgomery County Department of Police supports this legislation.

According to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons database, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, more than 600,000 people go missing annually, and approximately 4,400 unidentified bodies are recovered each year. Genetic technologies are constantly evolving, and as such, provide powerful investigative and scientific tools for law enforcement. Laws authorizing their use, however, must not only protect reasonable interests in privacy, but at the same time provide law enforcement with the tools they need to help identify deceased and missing individuals.

House Bill 476 acknowledges these protections for cases involving adults and expands the investigative and scientific use of FGGS analysis to unsolved cases involving deceased and missing youth. As such, the Cold Case Unit of the Montgomery County Department of Police supports the bill and urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report.