

**RBS SB 0354 Testimony February 2025.pdf**

Uploaded by: candy warden

Position: FAV

Candy Warden, President  
Rosa Bonheur Society, Inc.  
10240 Harvest Fields Drive  
Woodstock, MD 22163  
February 04, 2025

SB 0354 Testimony: FAVORABLE

Sponsor: Senator Salling,

My name is Candy Warden. I am President of the Rosa Bonheur Society, Inc. (RBS), a volunteer, nonprofit group formed in 2007 to protect and preserve the Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park, a Maryland human and pet cemetery with thousands of burials. The people with loved ones resting at our cemetery span across all the counties of Maryland.

In having over 17 years of experience of cemetery work with both RBS and the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites I am very aware of the impact of the lack of a unified cemetery inventory on our State, counties, and communities abilities to effectively address a multitude of issues. At least 26 other states have recognized this intrinsic need and implemented unified statewide cemetery inventories. It is time for the State of Maryland to develop a much needed resource that will provide benefits for not only governmental purposes, but all constituents.

### **The Problem**

Maryland has thousands of cemeteries, but there is no unified, comprehensive inventory validating their existence. More importantly there is currently no workgroup dedicated to establishing such an inventory.

### **Benefits of SB 0354**

- Establishment of a workgroup to research requirements needed for formulating a unified, comprehensive cemetery inventory and the funding thereof.
- A unified cemetery registry readily available for statewide access by governmental departments, agencies, concerned groups, and individuals that would be a cost effective resource in eliminating duplication of effort and unnecessary research.
- The merging of existing cemetery inventories held by various departments, agencies, etc.
- Secure, consistent, improved documentation of cemeteries.
- Protection for cemeteries through validation and documentation.
- A resource for legislative, legal, historical, and genealogical research.
- A resource for disaster management and land development.

SB 0354 will provide all of these benefits for constituents across the State of Maryland.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this testimony, which is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Candy Warden

Rosa Bonheur Society, Inc. (founded May 2007)

2010 Periwinkle Award Winner, Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites

### **3 Database testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Christine Simmons

Position: FAV

HB0509/SB0354-Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup-Establishment-FAV

Christine Simmons  
521 West Drive  
Severna Park, MD 21146  
410-978-7167

I work with a large diverse group of cemetery advocates and am on boards of both the Anne Arundel Genealogical Society and the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites. I work closely with Anne Arundel County's Cultural Resources to assure that they have cemetery locations to protect them from future development. I helped re-inventory many of those cemeteries several years ago.

There is no standardization or sharing of information. Large central Maryland counties have databases but there is no central depository. The Office of Cemetery Oversight, Maryland Historical Trust, and the State Highway Administration each have their own databases. Many Maryland counties have limited information, sometimes only from well-known or easily accessible cemeteries but not from neglected cemeteries, churches, African American cemeteries, or cemeteries on federal lands.

Several years ago, the Baltimore County Genealogical Society created a database documenting their cemeteries. That concept could be used throughout Maryland. Some basic information is already available on the Coalition to Protect Maryland's Burial Sites' website. I helped develop much of this information from public sources. Documenting these sites would allow others (developers, historical researchers, genealogists, title researchers, and disaster planners) access to the records. Each county government could modify the database for their specific needs. This would prevent development where there is no record of a cemetery's existence. One issue which would need to be addressed would be how to document cemeteries on private property whose owners are resistant to information being available to the public. The workgroup would focus on such issues.

I live in a county with some of the earliest cemeteries in the country including the oldest known tombstones in Maryland. Sometimes cemeteries allow us to research the only record of founders of our communities. We need to preserve this heritage and make it easier for cemeteries to be protected. Community engagement, tourism promotion, and historical significance could all benefit from this legislature.

Thank you for your time. I'm available to answer any questions. I look forward to a favorable request of this bill.

**Senate\_Bill\_354.pdf**

Uploaded by: Daniel Phelan

Position: FAV

Dear Chairpersons and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

My name is Daniel J. Phelan, and I reside in Baltimore County, Maryland. I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Baltimore County Genealogical Society.

I am writing you to ask that you help support Senate Bill 354, Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. As a genealogist who researches primarily in Maryland, I have come across too many abandoned cemeteries, and some cemeteries that are coming close to being abandoned.

Specific examples that immediately come to mind are (1) Western Cemetery—a large cemetery that was established in 1849 in Baltimore City; that has closed their office and has been providing only minimal maintenance in only a few newer sections, (2) St. Peter's Cemetery which began in 1851 in West Baltimore that became abandoned when the parish of St. Peters the Apostle closed around 2008. The cemetery was the burial place of both Whites and African Americans well before the Civil War, (3), the Western Star Cemetery—an African-American cemetery in Catonsville whose owner died and left the cemetery abandoned, and (4) Mount Zion Cemetery—a cemetery primarily for African American in Landover, which has been unkept for years. There too many other cemeteries in these conditions to mention in this letter.

The establishment of a commission to inventory cemeteries and burial sites is critical in establishing an inventory system in the state to monitor the continued preservation of existing cemeteries, and to build historical preservations programs that can allow for protection of abandoned cemeteries by providing financial assistance to restore these cemeteries through grants.

The tragic abandonment of sacred burial grounds is absolutely necessary to uphold a civilized society that respects the rights of our deceased ancestors. Please support the establishment of the proposed commission.

Thank you for your time and considering my input.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Phelan

**Senate\_Bill\_354.pdf**

Uploaded by: Daniel Phelan

Position: FAV



Dear Chairpersons and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

My name is Daniel J. Phelan, and I reside in Baltimore County, Maryland. I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Baltimore County Genealogical Society.

I am writing you to ask that you help support Senate Bill 354, Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. As a genealogist who researches primarily in Maryland, I have come across too many abandoned cemeteries, and some cemeteries that are coming close to being abandoned.

Specific examples that immediately come to mind are (1) Western Cemetery—a large cemetery that was established in 1849 in Baltimore City; that has closed their office and has been providing only minimal maintenance in only a few newer sections, (2) St. Peter's Cemetery which began in 1851 in West Baltimore that became abandoned when the parish of St. Peters the Apostle closed around 2008. The cemetery was the burial place of both Whites and African Americans well before the Civil War, (3), the Western Star Cemetery—an African-American cemetery in Catonsville whose owner died and left the cemetery abandoned, and (4) Mount Zion Cemetery—a cemetery primarily for African American in Landover, which has been unkept for years. There too many other cemeteries in these conditions to mention in this letter.

The establishment of a commission to inventory cemeteries and burial sites is critical in establishing an inventory system in the state to monitor the continued preservation of existing cemeteries, and to build historical preservations programs that can allow for protection of abandoned cemeteries by providing financial assistance to restore these cemeteries through grants.

The tragic abandonment of sacred burial grounds is absolutely necessary to uphold a civilized society that respects the rights of our deceased ancestors. Please support the establishment of the proposed commission.

Thank you for your time and considering my input.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Phelan

# **MCLA.pdf**

Uploaded by: David Zinner

Position: FAV



MCLA is a new group, formed in July of 2024. We've met weekly to discuss Maryland cemetery laws and how we can bring our real world experience to proposing improvements to those laws. We drafted language for seven bills that are in the legislative process in the House and Senate.

We are not professional lobbyists, nor are we paid for our work in Maryland's cemeteries. We have no paid staff. We don't even have a bank account. What we do have is passion and a belief that cemeteries show respect for the deceased, and that cemeteries are our history and our gift to future generations.

We are twelve Maryland citizens devoted to care, preservation, documentation and protection of all of Maryland's cemeteries. Our MCLA team represents hundreds of years of advocacy and hands-on cemetery care. We are multicultural, spanning ethnicities and religions. Our members have widespread and diverse experience and backgrounds, are bi-partisan, and come from different counties across the State.

MCLA puts a special emphasis on identification, preservation, care and when needed, restoration, of African American cemeteries. Our members are actively working with individual African American cemeteries or sections of cemeteries. We bring incarcerated citizens to learn about cemetery care, and participate in cemetery cleanups. We help identify African American cemeteries for grants.

MCLA members understand the importance of genealogy and actively work to document cemetery records and markers across the State. Our members work with statewide organizations to provide advice to Maryland's cemetery regulator and to educate Maryland citizens about the importance of cemeteries.

Maryland citizens can make a difference when they are actively involved in the legislative process. We are so grateful to our bill sponsors, three Republicans and four Democrats. And we are appreciative of the hearing process that allows us to explain the importance, need and impact of the bills that we initiated. Thank you for supporting legislation this session that will benefit all cemeteries in Maryland.

**SB0354 - zinner testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: David Zinner

Position: FAV

## **Inventory - SB0354: Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup**

I'm David Zinner, Coordinator for the Maryland Cemetery Legislative Advocates (MCLA). Our group has extensive experience with cemetery issues. I've been a member of the Maryland Advisory Council for Cemetery Oversight (ACCO) for 12 years though my testimony today is not as a representative of the Council.

SB0354 establishes the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. Currently there are three Maryland State agencies that record cemetery information - the Office of Cemetery Oversight, the Maryland Historical Trust and the State Highway Administration. We believe that none of these sites capture all Maryland cemeteries, nor do they always include critical information such as GPS location or cemetery condition.

SB0354 addresses the significant need to catalog and maintain an up-to-date inventory of cemeteries and burial sites across the state. Such an inventory is crucial for preserving our cultural heritage, ensuring respectful handling of burial sites, and supporting historical and genealogical research.

This bill will create a dedicated workgroup composed of representatives from various state and local entities, historical organizations, and community members with expertise and perspectives necessary to create a comprehensive and accurate inventory. The workgroup will identify and review existing definitions, documentation practices, and inventory systems from other states. This will help establish best practices and overcome challenges in designing and maintaining Maryland's cemetery inventory system. The workgroup will also recommend data collection and maintenance categories, including a public search function to ensure that the inventory will be easily accessible to researchers, historians, and the general public, fostering transparency and engagement.

SB0354 mandates the workgroup to determine the costs involved in designing, implementing, and maintaining a statewide inventory system and to identify potential funding sources to support these efforts, ensuring financial sustainability.

Cemeteries and burial sites are invaluable historical resources that provide insights into our communities' cultural and social history. Creating an inventory ensures that these sites are documented, protected, and maintained for future generations.

SB0354 represents a significant step towards preserving Maryland's cultural and historical heritage. We strongly support SB0354 and urge its passage.

# **Coalition to Protect Maryland**

Uploaded by: Eileen McGuckian

Position: FAV



Senate EEE Committee Hearing on SB354 Hearing Date: February 20, 2025

CPMBS position: FAV

## Create workgroup to study creation of MD database of all cemeteries

CPMBS is an all-volunteer nonprofit that since 1992 has advocated for improvement in distressful cemetery situations that occur across Maryland and for needed changes in state law. In 2021-2, I served on the committee that was charged by House & Senate Joint Chairmen to survey citizens and study historic African American Cemeteries and recommend strategies to improve their current situations. One of the major recommendations to come out of the 2022 report is to **"support development of a publicly accessible, map-based data layer dedicated to historic cemeteries throughout Maryland..."**

Some local inventories are available now, with varying types of information on each site and usually not up to date: Nabb Center in Salisbury (records on cemeteries in Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester Counties), Anne Arundel and Baltimore County Genealogical Societies (collect data via death records, tombstone inscriptions, and public programs), Caroline, Allegany, Queen Anne, Talbot, and Garrett Counties (MD Tombstone Project), Find-a-Grave (posts photos and basic information). Our Southern MD counties include cemeteries as part of their Historic Preservation programs. A Frederick County energetic volunteer chronicled known sites. In Central Maryland, Howard, Prince George's, and Montgomery have dedicated planning staff who cover cemetery sites and issues.

My experience in having twice organized and directed volunteer projects to survey all known cemeteries in Montgomery Co confirms their value. The first produced one page with basic known information; the second is now the official Burial Sites Inventory kept by Montgomery County Planning Board on a modern database.

State agencies touch on this subject matter. Maryland Historical Trust's state-wide inventory sometimes notes cemeteries at historic sites. SHA once started a list of cemeteries along our roads. OCO is charged with keeping a list. However, each of these lists keeps unique data. It's time to share for the betterment of all concerned.

A Unified inventory of Maryland cemeteries is crucial to identifying all sites everywhere, documenting them with common data, and making the information accessible. With the passage of SB354, all parties can work together for a database that will be useful for all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eileen McGuckian, President  
Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites, Inc.  
phileen3@verizon.net 301-468-7331

**Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1533 | Ellicott City, Maryland 21041 | [www.cpmbs.org](http://www.cpmbs.org)



**sb0354.pdf**

Uploaded by: Greg BURTON

Position: FAV

**Subject: Support for Senate Bill 354 - Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup**

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 354, which seeks to establish the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill is a crucial step towards preserving and documenting the rich historical and cultural heritage of Maryland's cemeteries and burial sites.

Cemeteries and burial sites are invaluable resources that provide insights into our past, offering a tangible connection to the lives and stories of those who came before us. However, many of these sites are at risk of being lost or forgotten due to neglect, development, or lack of proper documentation. Senate Bill 354 addresses this issue by creating a dedicated workgroup to study and recommend best practices for the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive state cemetery inventory system.

The proposed workgroup will bring together experts from various fields, including the Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, and other relevant organizations. This collaborative approach ensures that the workgroup will have the necessary expertise and resources to develop a robust and effective inventory system.

By identifying and reviewing current cemetery documentation practices, the workgroup will be able to recommend standardized definitions and procedures that will enhance the accuracy and consistency of cemetery records across the state. This will not only help preserve our historical and cultural heritage but also provide valuable information for genealogical research, land use planning, and community development.

Furthermore, the establishment of a state cemetery inventory system will promote greater public awareness and appreciation of these important sites. It will encourage local communities to take an active role in preserving their heritage and foster a sense of pride and connection to their history.

In conclusion, I urge you to support Senate Bill 354 and the establishment of the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill represents a significant investment in the preservation of our state's historical and cultural legacy, and I believe it will have a lasting positive impact on our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Burton



**sb0354.pdf**

Uploaded by: Greg BURTON

Position: FAV

**Subject: Support for Senate Bill 631 - Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup**

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 631, which seeks to establish the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill is a crucial step towards preserving and documenting the rich historical and cultural heritage of Maryland's cemeteries and burial sites.

Cemeteries and burial sites are invaluable resources that provide insights into our past, offering a tangible connection to the lives and stories of those who came before us. However, many of these sites are at risk of being lost or forgotten due to neglect, development, or lack of proper documentation. Senate Bill 631 addresses this issue by creating a dedicated workgroup to study and recommend best practices for the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive state cemetery inventory system.

The proposed workgroup will bring together experts from various fields, including the Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, and other relevant organizations. This collaborative approach ensures that the workgroup will have the necessary expertise and resources to develop a robust and effective inventory system.

By identifying and reviewing current cemetery documentation practices, the workgroup will be able to recommend standardized definitions and procedures that will enhance the accuracy and consistency of cemetery records across the state. This will not only help preserve our historical and cultural heritage but also provide valuable information for genealogical research, land use planning, and community development.

Furthermore, the establishment of a state cemetery inventory system will promote greater public awareness and appreciation of these important sites. It will encourage local communities to take an active role in preserving their heritage and foster a sense of pride and connection to their history.

In conclusion, I urge you to support Senate Bill 631 and the establishment of the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill represents a significant investment in the preservation of our state's historical and cultural legacy, and I believe it will have a lasting positive impact on our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Burton

**sb0354.pdf**

Uploaded by: Greg BURTON

Position: FAV

**Subject: Support for Senate Bill 631 - Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup**

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 631, which seeks to establish the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill is a crucial step towards preserving and documenting the rich historical and cultural heritage of Maryland's cemeteries and burial sites.

Cemeteries and burial sites are invaluable resources that provide insights into our past, offering a tangible connection to the lives and stories of those who came before us. However, many of these sites are at risk of being lost or forgotten due to neglect, development, or lack of proper documentation. Senate Bill 631 addresses this issue by creating a dedicated workgroup to study and recommend best practices for the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive state cemetery inventory system.

The proposed workgroup will bring together experts from various fields, including the Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, and other relevant organizations. This collaborative approach ensures that the workgroup will have the necessary expertise and resources to develop a robust and effective inventory system.

By identifying and reviewing current cemetery documentation practices, the workgroup will be able to recommend standardized definitions and procedures that will enhance the accuracy and consistency of cemetery records across the state. This will not only help preserve our historical and cultural heritage but also provide valuable information for genealogical research, land use planning, and community development.

Furthermore, the establishment of a state cemetery inventory system will promote greater public awareness and appreciation of these important sites. It will encourage local communities to take an active role in preserving their heritage and foster a sense of pride and connection to their history.

In conclusion, I urge you to support Senate Bill 631 and the establishment of the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill represents a significant investment in the preservation of our state's historical and cultural legacy, and I believe it will have a lasting positive impact on our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Burton

**sb0354.pdf**

Uploaded by: Greg BURTON

Position: FAV



**Subject: Support for Senate Bill 354 - Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup**

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 354, which seeks to establish the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill is a crucial step towards preserving and documenting the rich historical and cultural heritage of Maryland's cemeteries and burial sites.

Cemeteries and burial sites are invaluable resources that provide insights into our past, offering a tangible connection to the lives and stories of those who came before us. However, many of these sites are at risk of being lost or forgotten due to neglect, development, or lack of proper documentation. Senate Bill 354 addresses this issue by creating a dedicated workgroup to study and recommend best practices for the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive state cemetery inventory system.

The proposed workgroup will bring together experts from various fields, including the Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland Office of Cemetery Oversight, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, and other relevant organizations. This collaborative approach ensures that the workgroup will have the necessary expertise and resources to develop a robust and effective inventory system.

By identifying and reviewing current cemetery documentation practices, the workgroup will be able to recommend standardized definitions and procedures that will enhance the accuracy and consistency of cemetery records across the state. This will not only help preserve our historical and cultural heritage but also provide valuable information for genealogical research, land use planning, and community development.

Furthermore, the establishment of a state cemetery inventory system will promote greater public awareness and appreciation of these important sites. It will encourage local communities to take an active role in preserving their heritage and foster a sense of pride and connection to their history.

In conclusion, I urge you to support Senate Bill 354 and the establishment of the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This bill represents a significant investment in the preservation of our state's historical and cultural legacy, and I believe it will have a lasting positive impact on our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Burton



**SB0354\_FAV\_Testimony\_Jennifer Johnson.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jennifer Johnson

Position: FAV

SB0354 Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup - Establishment Support FAV

Jennifer Elsie Johnson

Founder Friends of St. Peter's Cemetery

Cemetery Address: 1301 Moreland Ave Baltimore MD 21216

Email: friendsofstpeterscemetery1851@gmail.com

Phone: 410- 929- 2544

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members,

My name is Jennifer Johnson and I am the Founder of Friends of St. Peter's Cemetery. The cemetery was opened in 1851 and is the hallowed ground for approximately 15,000 individuals who worked and lived in West Baltimore. My cemetery work has been recognized and honored by several local organizations and has been featured multiple times in the past few years on all local news networks.

Currently there is not a unified database for all cemeteries in Maryland. There should be so that there is standardized tracking, protection and maintenance of all cemeteries in Maryland. Having a unified database is just one piece to an overall larger more efficient streamlined process to maintain order and decency for all Maryland Cemeteries.

I unfortunately, could not provide oral testimony due to other commitments. However, I ask that you please support SB0354 Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup-Establishment.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Elsie Johnson*

Jennifer Elsie Johnson

Founder Friends of St. Peter's Cemetery

# **Salling Senate Bill 354 Written Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Johnny Ray Salling

Position: FAV

JOHNNY RAY SALLING  
Legislative District 6  
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Public Safety, Transportation,  
and Environment Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 321  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3587 · 301-858-3587  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3587  
JohnnyRay.Salling@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Chair Brian J. Feldman

Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 354. SB354 will establish a 15-person workgroup to study the creation of the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites. Maryland does not currently have a comprehensive inventory of cemeteries. We rely on several state agencies, such as the Office of Cemetery Oversight, the Maryland Historical Trust, and the State Highway Administration to maintain separate databases.

The eventual goal of SB354 is to create a more efficient system, that will make it easier for families, local governments, historians, and others to have access to cemeteries and cemetery records. A comprehensive inventory in a single place will provide consistency and make these records more accessible to all Marylanders who seek them. A unified database will also allow us to better document and preserve cemeteries for generations to come.

This newly established workgroup will be made up of key industry stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the Maryland Historical Trust, Office of Cemetery Oversight, local governments, genealogical groups, and descendant communities. This broad, inclusive participation will ensure that we can come to the most efficient and responsible solution to this issue. The workgroup will evaluate current cemetery documentation practices and existing cemetery inventories to determine the best methods for integrating existing information into a state cemetery inventory system. They will also identify and evaluate cemetery inventory systems implemented in other states to determine best practices for and challenges to designing, implementing, and maintaining a cemetery inventory system in Maryland.

Lastly, the workgroup will determine the cost of designing, implementing, and maintaining a state cemetery inventory system and recommend a source of funding beginning in fiscal year 2027.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 354.

Sincerely,

Senator Johnny Ray Salling

**SB0354 PresMD FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nicholas Redding

Position: FAV



# PRESERVATION MARYLAND

February 20, 2025

Hon. Brian J. Feldman  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland

**RE: SB0354 FAVORABLE**

**Chairperson Feldman,**

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB0354** – a piece of legislation that would establish the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup for the purpose of studying issues related to the establishment and maintenance of a state cemetery inventory system.

Preservation Maryland is the nonprofit, statewide voice for historic preservation that harnesses the power of historic places by revitalizing and reinvesting in communities, advocating, and building the historic trades workforce for the benefit of all Marylanders. (Learn more at: [presmd.org](http://presmd.org))

This legislation would establish a Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup for the purpose of studying issues related to the establishment and maintenance of a state cemetery inventory system and would, in turn, require the workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor by December 1, 2025. In short, this bill would create a workgroup to report on how best to monitor and inventory cemeteries across the state – a critical need for identification of historic cemeteries and prioritizing investment in preservation. We support this legislation as we believe its passage would provide the identification and support needed in the steps to preserve Maryland's historic Cemeteries and Burial Sites.

SB0354 is an impactful piece of legislation, and we urge a favorable report.

**Favorable**

Sincerely,

Nicholas A. Redding, President & CEO



**SB 354 02-20-2025\_MCCA\_FWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Stierhoff

Position: FWA

John R. Stierhoff, Esquire  
(410) 244-7833  
jrstierhoff@venable.com

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 354 – Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup -  
Establishment

Dear Chair Feldman:

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Cemetery and Cremation Association (“MCCA”) in Support with Amendments of Senate Bill 354.

Senate Bill 354 establishes the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup in order to study issues related to the establishment and maintenance of a State cemetery inventory system.

The Maryland Cemetery and Cremation Association respectfully requests to be included as a member of the Workgroup. The MCCA was founded in 1916 and represents the shared interests and concerns of professionals across the spectrum of Maryland’s “death care” industries.

Thank you for your consideration of the Amendment to Senate Bill 354.

Sincerely,

John R. Stierhoff

cc: Members, Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

# **SB 354 Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial**

Uploaded by: John Dove

Position: INFO

---

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR LETTER OF INFORMATION ON SB 354.**

TO: Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee  
FROM: Deborah Rappazzo, Executive Director, Office of Cemetery Oversight  
DATE: February 20, 2025  
BILL: SB 354 Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup -  
Establishment

---

Senate Bill 354 establishes a workgroup between the Office of Cemetery Oversight (“OCO”) and the Maryland Historical Trust for the purpose of studying issues related to the creation and maintenance of a State cemetery inventory system. This workgroup will also explore various laws and regulations pertaining to cemeteries and burial sites and evaluate the feasibility and cost of establishing a grant program to provide financial assistance to governmental entities and nonprofit genealogical and historical organizations.

The OCO is a small self-funded unit. When fully staffed, the OCO consists of a total of three full-time employees and one part-time employee. Due to OCO’s limited staffing, the OCO will have to increase staff to handle the new duties created by Senate Bill 354. Furthermore, since the OCO is a self-funded unit, it will be challenging for the OCO to absorb the additional staffing and legal expenses that will be necessary to fulfill the goals of this workgroup.

For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti, at **[Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov](mailto:Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov)**