

February 18, 2026

Maryland General Assembly  
Health Committee  
HB564 – Pet Cremation and Burial Services

Honorable Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of this Committee,

Thank you. Thank you for focusing attention and prioritizing the need to protect families for bad actors.

Our relationship with pets is uncomplicated. They are loyal and loving and deserve our respect as well. When a pet dies, it is the loss of a loved one. For some, it is their only child and for others their pet is also an equal member of the family. When you look to family photos, the pet is there. When celebrating birthdays, the pet is there and often has their own special day celebrated. When they are ill, we treat them often at considerable cost. But the pet is worth it, every penny. When they pass, sometimes on their own but more likely because a family member had to make a painful decision to euthanize, we grieve. We grieve because of the loss and the love.

Preparing for the burial or cremation of a pet is terrible. It is not a time of joy but it can be one of relief. A respectful way to memorialize the living memory of a pet and remain close to them after their life is gone. Many of us have buried and now, more likely, cremated the remains of a pet. It has both an emotional and financial cost. It is a solemn moment and truly should be a respectful experience.

But there are bad actors. Individuals who prey on the grief and generosity of families who are just trying to do right by their pet. I will boldly state, pets are not property. The law may treat them that way, but they just are not in a moral way. It is, therefore, immoral to lie to families and provide a service which ultimately deceives them and often deliver boxes of gravel instead of their pets' cremains.

We have regulation in Maryland, but we can do better. The proposed legislation ensures, transparency in services offered, accurate identification and tracking of remains, responsible operating standards and accountability. While I would like to see an amendment to punish those who unlawfully engage in the unlicensed practice, this legislation is a good beginning to elevate our own humanity.

This is not excessive regulation — it is reasonable consumer protection. More clarity in this industry can prevent fraud, reduce disputes, and strengthen public trust. It ensures that promises made to grieving families are promises kept.

Members, this legislation reflects dignity, compassion and common sense. It acknowledges the reality that pets deserve protection not only when they are alive, but for as long as they are with us. Cremains are just part of that process ... until we see them again.

I urge you to vote in favor of this important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Adam Lippe  
Senior Trial Assistant  
Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office

Of note, I am a 1995 graduate of The Johns Hopkins University, a 1998 graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law, who became a career prosecutor, chief of the Economic|Cyber and Animal Abuse Units in the Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office, and an adjunct faculty member for many years at the University of Maryland School of Law, University of Baltimore School of Law, University of Maryland Baltimore County and University of Maryland Global College, Goucher College and Loyola University.