

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 72 (Delegate Minnick)

Economic Matters

Funeral Homes and Cemeteries - Disclosure

This bill requires funeral homes and cemeteries to disclose, in ten-point boldface type, the identity of any corporate or other entity that has any ownership interest in the business. These disclosures are to be printed on the price lists and contracts.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The criminal penalty provisions applicable to this bill are not expected to have a significant effect on State finances or operations. The Office of Cemetery Oversight and the Board of Morticians advise that neither will experience an effect as a result of this bill.

Local Effect: The criminal penalty provisions applicable to this bill are not expected to significantly affect local finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law: Funeral establishments and cemeteries do not have to disclose any ownership information.

Background: There has been a plethora of legislation around the country concerning funeral homes in the last few years. This is an industry that was traditionally comprised of small local business people providing death care services to their communities, but within the past decade the death care industry has seen a wave of corporate activity. Conglomerates, looking to capitalize on local goodwill and corporate economies of scale, have been buying many of the local funeral homes but maintaining local field managements and their historical names.

Small Business Effect: Independently owned and operated local funeral homes that are small businesses could benefit to the extent that consumers consider corporate ownership a major determinant in deciding which funeral home to use. As a result, the bill could lead to a meaningful increase in business for some locally owned firms. However, in the case of a sudden death where family members must plan a funeral on short notice during an emotional time, it is expected that this bill will not have a significant impact on small funeral establishments or cemeteries.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: This bill was introduced previously as HB 729 in 1998 and received an unfavorable report from the House Economic Matters Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Department of Legislative Services

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cm/jr

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