



A sustainable, just, and prosperous economic future for all Marylanders

House Bill 1099
Historic African American Cemeteries Preservation Fund and Study
Appropriations Committee
SUPPORT

February 24, 2021

To the Chair and Esteemed Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Strong Future Maryland, we write in support of House Bill 1099. Strong Future Maryland works to advance bold, progressive policy changes to address systemic inequality and promote a sustainable, just and prosperous economic future for all Marylanders.

The state of Maryland continues to experience the lingering effects of slavery and is just beginning to reckon with its past. The preservation of historic African American cemeteries is an important and necessary measure for honoring the memory of those who were enslaved in Maryland. Like the Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we need to not only recognize that enslaved people in Maryland generated the wealth that built our state and our country, and we cannot allow their history to be forgotten.

Most of these cemeteries are lost, in disrepair and in need of historical preservation. They are not only a burial ground, but also a site for educating people. The same way we honor our veterans, we must honor those who built our country without the freedoms we enjoy today. Many Marylanders have ancestors who were enslaved and who are buried in these cemeteries. Tracing the history of enslaved ancestors and finding where they lived and may be buried is a difficult task made more difficult by the lack of investment in preserving enslaved people's history.

As the nation continues to reckon with systemic racism, this bill serves as a good first step towards the long overdue process of reconciliation and fight for racial equality and equity in Maryland.

We ask for a favorable report on House Bill 1099.

On behalf of Strong Future Maryland,

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