

February 2020

Maryland House of Representatives,

I am submitting my testimony as to why House Bill (HB )1099 is so important to not only the African American Community but to all communities in Maryland. As a volunteer in Allegany County Maryland at two of the known historical African American cemeteries, Sumner and Woodlawn Cemeteries: HP 1099 will help to alleviate the gentrification and abandonment these historic cemeteries. As a volunteer I have found out that often times these cemeteries were and are owned by the local African American Churches and or local funeral directors which have changed over the years. Due to the way in which many African Americans now worship and the changes in the African American churches these sites have become abandoned. This is one of the many reasons why HB 1099 is so important to help maintain and preserve the history of these sites. By having HB 1099 on the books also with the efforts of countless volunteers at these sites we can better maintain, preserve, restore, protect and commemorate graves, monuments and markers at these historic African American Cemeteries. I respectfully ask that you pass HP 1099 to help African American Cemeteries.

Bonita Austin

9 Long Drive

Cumberland, Maryland 21502

301-759-4598/240-727-3901

[Friendsofwoodlawncemetery@gmail.com](mailto:Friendsofwoodlawncemetery@gmail.com)