

Testimony for Maryland House of Delegates
February 26, 2024

**HB0969: The Katherine Morris Death Reclassification Act
In Favor with acceptance of amendments**

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I urge you to pass **HB0969: The Katherine Morris Death Reclassification Act** with full acceptance of its amendments. This bill was created in response to the mishandling of the case of the tragic death of Katherine Morris. With the passing of HB0969, FOR the purpose of requiring a law enforcement agency or related department in response to the medical examiner or the Secretary of Health changing or correcting the cause or manner of death recorded on the death certificate of a deceased individual in accordance with a provision of law, and allow for the continued closing of ambiguities.

With certain appeals/cases to the manner of death heard by an administrative law judge that have successfully changed the manner of death to unsolved. The passing of HB0969 will open the door for the involvement of a future law enforcement administration or agency who will provide more of a vigilant approach to solve a case. As opposed to having the police department re-investigate which would not be handled in the same manner. Also, with the requirement of the involvement from the assistant state's attorney there will be reassurance that the cases are handled properly and orderly.

HB0969 will ensure that there is transparency and accountability when making a decision on the manner of death and changes to it. This bill will grant peace of mind to persons of interest to get clarification of details about the death of their loved ones. Otherwise, many people will be left with ambiguity similar to what Ms. Morris experienced. If this bill is passed, families will not have to face the same battle that Ms. Morris had to face because there will be a law to protect them and their loved one's rights. I urge you to pass HB0969, honor the story of Kathy Morris and her mothers journey for justice, give hope to families who have experienced the same kind of injustice, and prevent stories of this happening ever again.

Thank you.