

GARY SIMMONS  
Legislative District 12B  
Anne Arundel County

Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees

Criminal Law and Procedure

Family and Juvenile Law



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 3, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of HB1354: Requirements for Sale or Transfer or Government Acquisition

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of Economic Matters and Health and Government Operations,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1354, a bill I am introducing which provides essential protections for cemeteries by ensuring responsible oversight in their sale, transfer, or acquisition. Cemeteries are more than just plots of land; they are sacred spaces that hold the memories and legacies of our loved ones. As such, we must safeguard them from improper handling and ensure they remain respected and maintained for future generations.

One key provision of this bill is the requirement that cemetery owners obtain approval from the Director of the Office of Cemetery Oversight before selling or transferring a cemetery. This measure ensures that any transaction involving a cemetery is conducted responsibly, carefully considering the cemetery's historical, cultural, and community significance. Without such oversight, there is a risk of neglect, improper land use, or loss of access for families wishing to visit their loved one's final resting places.

Additionally, it is important to mention that in too many cases, abandoned cemeteries fall into disrepair, becoming overgrown, vandalized, or even repurposed without due consideration. By allowing for governmental acquisition under specific circumstances, this bill creates a pathway for preserving and restoring these critical sites, ensuring they receive the care and respect they deserve.

This legislation also establishes precise requirements for any sale, transfer, or acquisition of a cemetery. Such regulations are vital to preventing commercial exploitation, ensuring that cemetery operations remain transparent, and maintaining public trust in how these spaces are managed.

I urge the Committee to support HB1354 and move it forward for passage. This bill is a necessary step in preserving the dignity of our cemeteries, protecting the interests of families and communities, and ensuring responsible oversight of these sacred spaces.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Simmons", written over a horizontal line.

Delegate Gary Simmons  
Anne Arundel County, District12B