

Cemetery Sale and Transfer

HB1354 – SB1021

Testimony of Yvonne Fisher for Judicial Proceedings- Economic Matters

I am a member of the Maryland Cemetery Legislative Advocates (MCLA). Our group has extensive experience with cemetery issues.

I have also been a member of the Advisory Council for the Office of Cemetery Oversight (ACCO) for 9 years. My testimony today is not as a representative of the council.

Sales and transfers of Cemeteries should have a more strict and procedural process that must be documented and approved by the department of Cemetery Oversight. There are no regulations or legal requirements to assure that this process does not leave room for abuses and illegal use of a cemetery.

There should be a requirement that an owner must inform every family whose loved one/s are interred in their cemetery of any and all proposed sale or transfers of ownership. This will give the families time to make inquiries and obtain information about the new proprietors.

It is to the benefit of everyone in the State of Maryland to be assured that their loved ones are protected from any form of abuse and neglect that may be a result of a sale or transfer that has not been communicated to them. If there is no legal procedure this could possibly result in situations that would negatively affect the families of those individuals that are interred.

No one thinks about their last resting place on a daily basis, but we do think about our loved ones and their last resting place. Those individuals are not here to protect themselves, so it is imperative that we protect their

last resting place by assuring that there are legal requirements and procedures that will ultimately protect them.

We must assure that there are procedures and processes in place for not only those who have passed away and are now interned in a cemetery but for all of us who someday will be in that position.

In the future there may be a need to look closer to Green Burial Sites. The industry of burying individuals will continue to evolve, and our laws and regulations must be available to assure the wellbeing of the deceased.

We must be the protectors for those who are not able to protect themselves.