

## **OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 0957**

**. Maryland funeral directors have voiced significant concerns regarding the possibility of a religiously oriented not-for-profit organization owning and controlling funeral homes and crematories. Critics worry that such an entity might seek religious exemptions to avoid adhering to the same stringent state laws that bind all other operators. This exemption, if granted, could create an unjust competitive advantage, undermining the regulatory framework established to protect consumers and public health.**

**‘ Senate Bill 0957 will permit unlicensed individuals to operate a Not-for-Profit Corporation as a funeral establishment in violation of Section 7-309 of Health Occupations of the Annotated Code of Maryland.**

**. The Maryland Legislature intentionally banned the formation of new corporations for the purpose of owning a funeral establishment to protect the consumer.**

**. It is important to note that Not-for-Profit corporations do not have owners or shareholders.**

**. Not-for-Profit corporations are controlled and governed by a Board of Directors.**

**. Individuals with a criminal history can, and often do, form Not-for-Profit entities..**

**Individuals with a criminal history can start a Not-for-Profit and serve on the Board of Directors of the Not-for-Profit. Does Maryland really want unlicensed individuals who have not been educated or trained in funeral service to run and control funeral establishments.**

**. If unlicensed individuals wish to own a funeral home, they can go to mortuary science school, educate themselves in human anatomy, microbiology, thanatology, business management, mortuary law, business law, funeral principles, funeral customs and practices, serve an apprenticeship for a year, go through a criminal background check, apply to the Board of Morticians to determine if they have the requisite knowledge, character, and fitness to become a licensed funeral service provider. Once they have completed all of the education, training, and licensing, they can open a funeral establishment and operate it without q profit, if that is their desire.**

**. Senate Bill 0957 is a matter of individuals not wanting to dedicate their entire life to funeral service. Instead, the proponents of the bill are trying to find a short-cut to achieve the benefits of what has taken those of us in the profession a lifetime to accomplish.**

**. Maryland's funeral home industry is meticulously regulated to protect the best interests of families while fostering a competitive and robust market. For-Profit funeral homes-especially those with decades of trusted service-have demonstrated their ability to provide affordable, compassionate care under rigorous standards. The proposed shift toward not-for-profit models threatens to disrupt this delicate balance by potentially compromising consumer protections, reducing employment opportunities, and inadvertently driving up costs. With careful oversight already ensuring that current practices meet the highest benchmarks, it is clear that the existing structure best serves Maryland's families.**

Thank you,

Earl L. Canapp, CFSP

Maryland State Funeral Directors Association