

# **Cemetery Sale and Transfer**

## **SB1021 – HB1354**

Testimony of Yvonne Fisher

### **Business Regulations**

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.

Case in point, if you purchase a cemetery that has large amount of land that appears to be unused that land will require an ecological or other type of survey to assure that there are no burials there before a structure can erected.

Purchasing an existing Cemetery with structures presently on the property should also be required to preform ground penetrating surveys. This should occur to assure that the structure was not built on a part of the original cemetery grounds.

There should be a requirement that the current owner must inform every family of the loved one/s that are interred in their cemetery of any and all proposed sale or transfers of ownership and or construction. This will give

the families time to make inquiries and obtain information about the new proprietors and their proposed changes to the cemetery. If there are any.

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 the changes in the use of the land of the cemetery where they now rest.

We must assure that there are procedures and processes are 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.

The industry of burying individuals will continue to evolve, and our laws and regulations must be available for the changes that will be needed

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