

SB0671 Office of Cemetery Oversight - Study of Deathcare and Funeral Practices
Support FWA (Favorable with Amendments)

Jennifer Elsie Johnson, Founder Friends of St. Peter's Cemetery

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Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Jennifer Johnson and I am the Founder of Friends of St. Peter's Cemetery. The cemetery was opened in 1851 and is the hallowed ground for approximately 15,000 individuals who worked and lived in West Baltimore. My cemetery work has been recognized and honored by several local organizations and has been featured multiple times in the past few years on all local news networks.

At some point in time unfortunately every person in our state will die. We sadly lost many people unexpectedly during these last several years because of the COVID19 pandemic. It is important for us as a state to ensure proper environmental health. With more and more people opting for cremation it is important for us to understand how death care and funeral practices affect our environment.

I unfortunately could not provide oral testimony due to other commitments. However, I ask that you please support with amendments SB0671 Office of Cemetery Oversight - Study of Deathcare and Funeral Practices. The amendments being requested are as follows: 1) drive the fiscal note down to approximately \$14, 200 maximum utilizing volunteers and students to complete the study; 2)keep open lines of communication and work with others that are interested in the success of this specific legislation in the Senate and House of Delegates special interest should be given to include but not necessarily be limited to the following members of the House of Delegates: Delegate Gary Simmons, Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Delegate Terri L. Hill, Delegate Ashanti Martinez, Delegate Ryan Nawrocki, Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Delegate Kathy Szeliga, Delegate Samuel Rosenberg and Delegate Pam Guzzone and allow them to give their approval on the finalized version of the legislation; 3) make sure this bill incorporates everything from HB0152 from the 2024 legislative session and 4) consider moving this from the Office of Cemetery Oversight (a team which is suffering from limited bandwidth and staffing shortages) to Department of the Environment. Thanks in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Elsie Johnson

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