

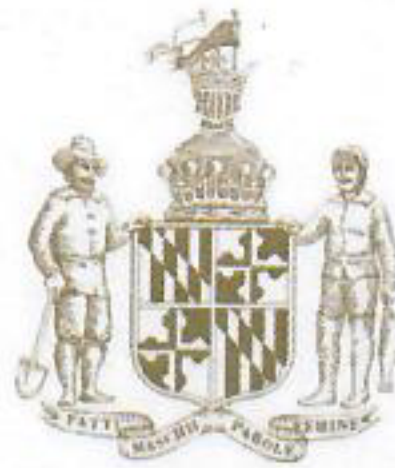
GARY SIMMONS
Legislative District 12B
Anne Arundel County

Judiciary Committee

Subcommittees

Criminal Law and Procedure

Family and Juvenile Law



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 14th, 2025

RE: Testimony in Support for HB0711

Chair Pena-Melnyk and Vice-Chair Cullison and esteemed members of the committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB0711, which mandates the Office of Cemetery Oversight, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Department of Labor, and the Department of the Environment, to conduct a comprehensive study on the environmental and public health impacts of deathcare and funeral practices in Maryland. This critical legislation will ensure that our state evaluates and modernizes its deathcare industry to align with contemporary public health, environmental sustainability, and ethical considerations.

Deathcare and funeral practices significantly impact our environment and public health. Traditional burial methods involve embalming chemicals, non-biodegradable materials, and land use concerns, while cremation releases carbon emissions and pollutants into the air. With increasing public interest in alternative and eco-friendly end-of-life options, Maryland has an opportunity to lead in the development of sustainable and responsible deathcare practices.

As Maryland continues to embrace innovative and eco-conscious solutions in various sectors, it is crucial that we extend the same efforts to the funeral and cemetery industry. This study will lay the groundwork for informed policymaking that respects cultural traditions while promoting sustainability and public well-being.

I urge the General Assembly to pass HB0711 to ensure Maryland takes a responsible, data-driven approach to modernizing deathcare and funeral practices. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Gary Simmons in black ink.

Delegate Gary Simmons