

GARY SIMMONS
Legislative District 12B
Anne Arundel County

Judiciary Committee
Subcommittees

Criminal Law and Procedure
Family and Juvenile Law



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 14th, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of HB0509

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

I am writing to express my strong support for HB0509, which seeks to establish the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup. This legislation is a critical step toward the preservation and documentation of Maryland's cemeteries and burial sites, ensuring that these sacred spaces are properly identified, recorded, and maintained for future generations.

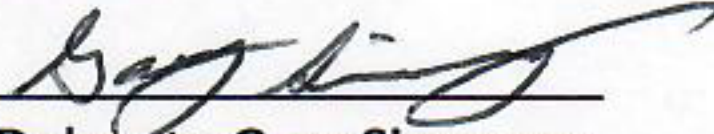
Cemeteries and burial sites are invaluable historical and cultural resources that provide insight into our state's rich history, genealogy, and diverse heritage. However, many of these sites are at risk due to neglect, development, environmental changes, and lack of comprehensive record-keeping. Without a centralized and accurate inventory, countless burial grounds—especially those of marginalized communities—remain unprotected and in danger of being lost or destroyed.

Establishing the Maryland Inventory of Cemeteries and Burial Sites Workgroup will allow stakeholders, including historians, genealogists, preservationists, and community members, to collaborate in creating a detailed and accessible statewide inventory. This initiative will not only enhance preservation efforts but also promote public awareness, respect, and responsible stewardship of these sacred spaces.

Furthermore, by requiring the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2025, HB0509 ensures that a strategic plan is developed to guide future actions in maintaining and protecting Maryland's burial sites. This is a necessary measure to prevent the further loss of historically significant cemeteries and to uphold our commitment to honoring those who came before us.

I urge the committee to give HB0509 a favorable report and to support its passage. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,


Delegate Gary Simmons