

Candy Warden, President  
Rosa Bonheur Society, Inc.  
10240 Harvest Fields Drive  
Woodstock, MD 22163  
February 04, 2025

HB 0509 Testimony: FAVORABLE

Sponsors: Delegates Simmons, Harris, Johnson, Taylor, and Tomlinson,

My name is Candy Warden. I am President of the Rosa Bonheur Society, Inc. (RBS), a volunteer, nonprofit group formed in 2007 to protect and preserve the Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park, a Maryland human and pet cemetery with thousands of burials. The people with loved ones resting at our cemetery span across all the counties of Maryland.

In having over 17 years of experience of cemetery work with both RBS and the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites I am very aware of the impact of the lack of a unified cemetery inventory on our State, counties, and communities abilities to effectively address a multitude of issues. At least 26 other states have recognized this intrinsic need and implemented unified statewide cemetery inventories. It is time for the State of Maryland to develop a much needed resource that will provide benefits for not only governmental purposes, but all constituents.

### **The Problem**

Maryland has thousands of cemeteries, but there is no unified, comprehensive inventory validating their existence. More importantly there is currently no workgroup dedicated to establishing such an inventory.

### **Benefits of HB 0509**

- Establishment of a workgroup to research requirements needed for formulating a unified, comprehensive cemetery inventory and the funding thereof.
- A unified cemetery registry readily available for statewide access by governmental departments, agencies, concerned groups, and individuals that would be a cost effective resource in eliminating duplication of effort and unnecessary research.
- The merging of existing cemetery inventories held by various departments, agencies, etc.
- Secure, consistent, improved documentation of cemeteries.
- Protection for cemeteries through validation and documentation.
- A resource for legislative, legal, historical, and genealogical research.
- A resource for disaster management and land development.

SB 0354 will provide all of these benefits for constituents across the State of Maryland.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this testimony, which is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Candy Warden

Rosa Bonheur Society, Inc. (founded May 2007)

2010 Periwinkle Award Winner, Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites