

**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 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB 1003

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, Delegate Gary Simmons, and I am testifying today in strong support of HB 1003, which establishes a clear and transparent process for the permanent relocation of human remains while ensuring the dignity and protection of burial sites across Maryland.

This legislation is necessary to address longstanding gaps in the oversight and regulation of disinterment and reinterment practices. Currently, the authority to approve the relocation of human remains rests primarily with the State's Attorney, with minimal safeguards to ensure that all interested parties—including descendants, historians, and preservationists—are adequately notified and involved in the process. By requiring approval from the Office of Cemetery Oversight (OCO), HB 1003 creates a centralized, consistent, and expert-driven framework for reviewing such requests.

Additionally, the bill strengthens notification procedures, requiring applicants to publish notice in a newspaper of general circulation, and directly notify potential descendants. These measures ensure that families and community stakeholders are informed and have the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting the final resting places of their loved ones.

It is important to mention that this bill does not place undue burdens on individuals seeking to relocate remains, particularly in cases involving close family members. By streamlining the process for direct descendants and allowing for appropriate exemptions, the legislation strikes a balance between efficiency and accountability. The requirement for the Maryland Department of Health to update regulations in consultation with OCO will help modernize and standardize the handling of disinterment and reinterment, improving transparency while protecting the integrity of burial sites.

I recognize concerns about the potential fiscal impact on OCO; however, I believe that existing resources can be leveraged effectively without the need for significant expansion. Strategic administrative adjustments, and partnerships with local agencies can ensure that the bill's requirements are met without excessive costs.

In conclusion, HB 1003 is a necessary and measured step toward ensuring that burial site relocations are handled with the respect, transparency, and oversight they deserve. I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Simmons", written over a horizontal line.

Delegate Gary Simmons

Anne Arundel County, District 12B

