

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 14, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of HB1000

Dear members of Judiciary and Health and Government Operations

I write to you today to express my strong support for HB1000, a bill that seeks to protect the dignity of human remains, safeguard burial sites, and ensure that cemeteries—whether publicly or privately owned—are respected under the law. The proposed legislation strengthens penalties for acts of desecration and clarifies the definition of a “permanent cemetery” to include those owned by families or religious organizations, reinforcing the fundamental principle that all final resting places deserve protection.

Throughout history, burial sites have been regarded as sacred spaces, serving as places of remembrance, respect, and mourning for the deceased and their loved ones. Unfortunately, incidents of grave tampering, desecration, and the illicit handling of human remains have become distressingly common. These acts are not only violations of public trust but also cause irreparable emotional harm to families and communities. By prohibiting individuals from mutilating, tampering with, trafficking, or improperly storing human remains, HB1000 establishes a clear legal framework to prevent such egregious offenses and to hold violators accountable.

Additionally, the inclusion of pet remains within this legislation acknowledges the importance of animal companions in many people's lives. Families deserve the right to honor their beloved pets in a manner free from the risk of desecration or theft. Extending legal protections to pet burial sites further upholds the values of respect and dignity that this bill seeks to enshrine.

The enhanced penalties proposed by HB1000 will serve as a strong deterrent against individuals who would otherwise engage in these heinous acts. By reinforcing criminal prohibitions against the disturbance of human and pet remains, Maryland will join other states in ensuring that the sanctity of burial sites remains intact.

I urge the committee to pass HB1000 and send a clear message the state of Maryland values and protects the final resting places of its residents. Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully request a favorable report on this critical piece of legislation.

Sincerely,


Delegate Gary Simmons