

Required Information:

HB0868 Estates and Trusts - Interpretation of Wills - Evidence of Intent (Granny's Law)

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Support FAV

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Witness Testimony:

Dear Judiciary Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and Committee Members,

My name is Jennifer Johnson and I ask for your full committees favorable support for "Granny's Law" HB0868 Estates and Trusts - Interpretation of Wills - Evidence of Intent.

What happened to me was a direct violation of my grandmother's will and of my human rights. I have never been through anything so horrific in my entire life and Granny's Law seeks to make sure this never happens to anyone else in our state ever again. To give you a very brief synopsis, my grandmother was leaving a charitable donation to 4 major health related charities with the goal of positively impacting African American lives as we are disproportionately affected by health disparities. While all of these organizations document that African Americans are disproportionately affected by all of these disease states, instead of allowing me to be what I am God ordained to be, my grandmother's Personal Representative, a baltimore county judge thought she knew better then me, knew better then my grandmother and forced me into jail when my best friend was dying of cancer and allowed 2 attorneys she preferred to bill a beyond excessive amount of money for work I completed. The judges order forced me to give all of my grandmother's information to these lawyers or I could not get out of the jail.

This Baltimore county orphan's court judge allowed these 2 attorneys to bill almost double the annual salary for Senate and Delegate members for Maryland General Assembly against my grandmother's estate for work I completed. Something that would have cost me around \$3,000 max and a matter of weeks to complete had the courts never gotten involved. Wound up costing my grandmother's legacy and did the exact opposite of what my grandmother wanted, which was to help African Americans who are already suffering, It cost me years of my life as it is taking me time to recover and it is the exact opposite of anything my grandmother, any of family or friends, I or anyone would have ever wanted. It broke my mother's heart and caused her unnecessary stress and per the instructions in my grandmother's will I may or may not have hired an attorney to complete the administration of her will, because the will was very simple and straightforward if followed. Instead Judge Fisher of Baltimore County's Orphan Court assigned 2 lawyers at a bill rate of \$395 an hour per attorney.

My first attorney gave me all of my fees back as I had done all of the work to bring it almost to a close before the courts decided to do the damage and destruction they did and that was around \$25,000. The court assigned attorneys billed almost 4 times as much as my first attorney and did the exact opposite of anything I or my grandmother would have ever wanted and in the end

threatened to do even more damage if I did not stop questioning or verbally protesting what they were doing. One should also note that there is a clause in my grandmother's will that is in most wills that the court forcibly ignored. The clause in question if not ignored by the courts would not have allowed the judge or her assigned attorneys to do any of the things she did to me or to my grandmother's estate. That clause is included in the House and Senate bill.

HB0868 Granny's Law seeks to CORRECT the following:

- Historical Wrongs of Health related Charities not supporting Maryland State Policy of working to eradicate Health Disparities
- Historical wrongs of the Orphans Courts ignoring people's wills and essentially allowing lawyers to make large profits off of deceased people's estates.
- Historical wrongs of the Orphans court overriding the descendants family's and trusted personal representatives
- Historical wrongs imposed on Caregivers. Caregivers are most often times the Power of Attorney and then the Personal Representative. Caregivers rights and respect are often times ignored. This bill seeks to give the power and authority back to the person who has done most if not all of the work to help the decedent in life and in death.
- This bill will help honor my Granny (Jennifer Johnson) and anyone else's loved one whose will and/ or estate was or unfortunately is currently being grossly misinterpreted by the orphan courts in Maryland

I hope that you will see the disproportionate need faced by African Americans in many areas of disease but specifically in the area of cancer, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's and mental illness and understand that the correct thing to do and way to help is to give your committees full favorable support for this legislation and help honor all groups suffering from health disparities, help honor all caregivers many of whom die while taking care of others and help honor my Granny. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Elsie Johnson

Founder Friends of St. Peter's Cemetery

In loving memory of my Granny

& in Honor of all of our family and friends who have lost their battles to various health disparities