



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

EVAN GLASS
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, CHAIR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1445 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Licensed Funeral Establishments –
Provision of Fact Sheet on Real Property Ownership

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Montgomery County Councilmember Evan Glass

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 1445 - Licensed Funeral Establishments – Provision of Fact Sheet on Real Property Ownership.

It is my honor to represent the 1.1 million residents of Montgomery County, one of the most socioeconomically diverse counties in the United States. Two-thirds of our residents have chosen to own their homes here because of our high-quality services and amenities, and many desire to endow their homes to their next of kin as a form of generational wealth.

This legislation streamlines the probate process to ensure there's little or no delay in designating an heir when a homeowner passes away. It ensures that all households have the opportunity to inherit generational wealth. Informing low-income residents on how to obtain free or low-cost services to preserve the wealth tied into their homes is a critical step towards promoting equity in homeownership.

The mourning period following the death of a loved one is a difficult time for all of us but for many, it's exacerbated by the complexity of navigating the probate process. Without access to knowledge of free or low-cost services in probate law, low-income households may end up with tangled titles on their homes.

Certain vacant and blighted properties are in the conditions they are in due to being tangled in probate. Tangled properties that fall into disrepair force-displacement pose a danger to neighbors by attracting pests and illicit activities and reduce the inventory of affordable housing.

Tangled titles can have devastating consequences, including the inability to sell a home; ineligibility for state and local assistance programs; and even the loss of generational wealth to tax sales.

I respectfully urge the committee to remove this barrier to home ownership and provide a favorable report on HB 1445.