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PITTSBURGH PARENT // WASHINGTON FAMILY // WASHINGTON JEWISH WEEK

February 10, 2025

Maryland State Judiciary Committee
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

To members of the Judiciary Committee,

We respectfully ask for an unfavorable report on HB623, which would move all public estate notices from every Register of Wills office in the State to a centralized online website operated by the Register of Wills. Under current law, the register and representatives must provide notice in a newspaper of general circulation for a certain amount of time to provide notice to creditors for any outstanding debt owed by the decedent and notice of death to the heirs of the decedent. We believe this proposed move to an online website controlled by the register will deny the creditors and the public proper access to the notices. It is a well-known fact that not everyone, especially some within the senior community and the disadvantaged, have access to the internet.

In addition to the above, letting this bill pass will have a tremendous negative effect for Washington Jewish Week (WJW) and Baltimore Jewish Times (JT), publications that have been serving Jewish communities in Maryland since 1930 and 1918 respectively. WJW and JT have been a publications of record for public estate notices for many decades. WJW and JT do a terrific job of processing the public estate notices without error and provides the public with access to them. Letting this bill pass through will significantly reduce WJW and JT's ability to service their communities. If this bill were to pass through, jobs would be lost, and the loss of revenue will make it difficult for the venerable WJW and JT to survive.

We urge you to veto bill HB623.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Burke".

Craig Burke
CEO & Publisher