



Maryland State's Attorneys' Association

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DATE: February 7, 2025

BILL NUMBER: HB 616

POSITION: Favorable

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) supports House Bill 616 and urges this Committee to issue a favorable report.

In Maryland, prosecution for most misdemeanor offenses must be instituted within one year from the date the offense was committed. Some crimes, though, like destruction of funerary objects in violation of MD. CODE ANN., CRIM. LAW § 10-404, frequently go undiscovered until long after this time period has expired. Family members visiting a cemetery where a loved one is interred are victimized twice, in a sense – first, upon discovering that their loved one's final resting place has been damaged or defaced, and then again, by the fact that the criminal legal system cannot provide redress or bring the perpetrator to justice.

HB 616 increases the statute of limitations for this offense to three years, and provides that the clock starts to run only once local officials knew or reasonably should have known of the offense. Extending the statute of limitations enhances the ability of Maryland's prosecutors to seek justice for victims and hold offenders accountable, and is necessary given the unique nature of this offense.