

JOHNNY RAY SALLING  
Legislative District 6  
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Public Safety, Transportation,  
and Environment Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 321  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3587 · 301-858-3587  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3587  
JohnnyRay.Salling@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Chair Kriselda Valderrama  
Vice Chair Lorig Charkoudian  
230 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Thank you for the opportunity to present Senate Bill 233. At its heart, this bill is about respect for those who have passed, their families, and the communities connected to these sacred spaces.

Cemeteries are places of history and deep cultural significance. Yet under current law, when a cemetery is proposed for sale, transfer, or redevelopment, the process can limit who has a voice and how those decisions are made. Senate Bill 233 updates that framework in a balanced way.

First, the bill ensures that those with a real connection to a cemetery have a seat at the table, including individuals with burial rights, descendant community organizations, preservation groups, and local governments.

Second, it provides clear judicial oversight. Courts will hear from interested parties and determine whether a proposed sale or change in use is appropriate, with the burden on the property owner to justify the proposal.

The bill also creates a pathway for preservation. If a proposal is not in the best interest of those connected to the cemetery, the court may facilitate transfer to a nonprofit or descendant organization committed to maintaining the site.

Finally, if a sale is approved, the bill ensures human remains are treated with dignity through proper relocation and reinterment using sale proceeds.

This bill does not stop development, it ensures these decisions are made carefully, transparently, and with respect for all involved. I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB233

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johnny Ray Salling".

Senator Johnny Ray Salling