

Chair, Vice Chair, members of the Committee and Committee staff, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Bill Bolster. My firm, Lewis Rice, serves as outside counsel for National Rarities.

National Rarities seeks a change in the law to allow National Rarities' to do business in Maryland like it does in nearly all other states. The only difference between Maryland based secondhand precious metal object dealers and National Rarities is that National Rarities lacks a brick and mortar presence in Maryland. National Rarities hosts events with local jewelers in which it buys second hand jewelry and precious metals from customers of the local jeweler. When holding such events outside of Maryland, National Rarities complies with state, county and municipal laws for such purchases. This includes sharing the items purchased with local law enforcement and holding those items for the applicable periods to allow local law enforcement to confirm the items aren't on its stolen items list. National Rarities also complies with the applicable law regarding the buyers National Rarities sends to events, including any requirements for state, county or municipal licensure.

As noted, Maryland law currently doesn't allow for a business model like National Rarities because it doesn't have a brick and mortar presence in Maryland. This appears to be due to the applicable statute remaining as originally enacted in 1981, focused solely on estate sales and a concern for transient buyers, buying on their own, with no oversight nor means for law enforcement to find them if stolen goods, for instance, were involved.

If enacted, HB 1191 would allow National Rarities to conduct events at local jewelers that would, in effect, allow those consumers to bring the estate items to National Rarities rather than hold an estate sale. In each case, the local jeweler and National Rarities would comply with all applicable laws and regulations secondhand precious metal object dealers. National Rarities would be considered a temporary event based dealer subject to all licensure and reporting requirements under Maryland law. National Rarities would also be subject to and comply with county and municipal law regarding licensure, reporting and hold requirements.

For those reasons, I respectfully support HB 1191 and ask for a favorable report.

Thank you!