



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

Maryland Board of Morticians & Funeral Directors
4201 Patterson Ave
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

February 17, 2026

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee
3 East Senate Miller Office
Building 11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**RE: SB 510 - State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors - Funeral Direction
Licensure and Apprentices - Requirements - Letter of Opposition**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

The Maryland Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors is submitting this letter in opposition of Senate Bill 510 – State Board of Morticians and Funeral Directors - Funeral Direction Licensure and Apprentices - Requirements.

While the Board recognizes that expanding access to the profession to individuals who have not completed a traditional mortuary science degree may be appropriate under some circumstances—especially where the applicant has a religious objection to participating in an embalming practicum or where they already possess an academic degree in the sciences, the Board is concerned that SB 510 does not provide sufficient protections to ensure that licensed funeral director will have requisite knowledge to meet the standards of the profession. For example, while funeral directors do not engage in embalming, understanding the embalming process on a theoretical level is absolutely essential to acting as a funeral director, as otherwise the potential licensee would have insufficient knowledge to explain to grieving families what options they have and what the differences between those options are in practice.

Furthermore, although SB 510 establishes a 60 credit hour minimum requirement, it does not establish what must be included in those credit hours, aside from stating that they must be “relevant to the practice of a funeral director” and that 30 credit hours must be “in a program approved by the Board.” This vague requirement simply does not ensure that prospective funeral directors will receive the education essential to providing quality services to grieving Marylanders.

Finally, while the Board recognizes that other states have implemented similar legislation to expand access to funeral service professions by modifying education and examination requirements, we do not believe that it should be dispositive in this case, especially without a consideration of the broader regulation of funeral directors in those states, especially if those states clearly prescribe the specific coursework that must be completed in order to become a licensed funeral director.

To be clear: the Board is not opposed to reconsidering the educational requirements for funeral directors, especially when the prospective applicant already holds an advanced degree in the sciences. But, these decisions should be made in an informed and deliberate manner with the involvement of the Board, and any legislative solution should leave significant room for the Board to adopt implementing regulations in COMAR to ensure the quality of funerary services does not suffer as a result of these changes.

For these reasons, the Board respectfully requests an unfavorable report on SB 510. If you'd like further information, please contact me at Erika.malone1@maryland.gov or at (443)-826-3592; or Lillian Reese, Legislative Liaison at lillian.reese@maryland.gov or (443) 794-4757.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erika Malone", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Erika Malone
Executive Director

The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.