

**January 27, 2026**

**To the Members of the Maryland General Assembly,**

My name is Donna Nelson, Co-Owner of the Point of Rocks Colored Cemetery 1879 in Frederick County. I am writing in dedicated support of Senate Bills SB233 and SB234, which address the transfer, sale, and alternate use of abandoned cemeteries in Maryland.

The issue of abandoned cemeteries is profound and calls for immediate attention. The proposed bills require that any government or business buying an abandoned cemetery must take the pivotal step of reaching out to the descendants of those interested. This provision ensures that descendants, community organizations, or non-profit entities are recognized and empowered to protect the sacred resting places of their ancestors. Furthermore, if a business or government entity acquires ownership, they must help the reinterment of remains, ensuring respectful treatment of the deceased.

My family's experience demonstrates the need for this legislation. When we pursued ownership of our cemetery, we faced significant challenges due to fragmented records and unclear legal status. Through dedication and perseverance, we were able to secure ownership through "Quiet Title" in February 2025. These bills would have made that process much easier and ensured protection for other families in similar situations.

Passing SB233 and SB234 will ensure Maryland's sacred grounds are treated with respect and descendants can actively preserve their heritage. I urge you to support these vital bills and help honor our ancestors and communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Respectfully,**

Donna Nelson

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