

Revised Written Testimony (Updated for SB0190)

SB0190 – Estates and Trusts – Interpretation of Wills – Evidence of Intent (Granny’s Law)

Position: SUPPORT

Dr. Miriam C. Purnell, PharmD

Pharmacist | Professor | Health Disparities Expert

Date: January 2026

Chairman Muse and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **updated testimony** in strong support of SB0190, known as *Granny’s Law*. This legislation is being reintroduced to address a clear and troubling issue: when an individual’s explicit charitable intent—particularly intent aimed at reducing racial health disparities—is not honored.

This bill arose from a case in which a woman intentionally directed that her estate be used to support organizations working to reduce health disparities in Black communities, specifically in cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer’s disease, mental illness, and cancer. Despite this clarity, beneficiaries failed to use the funds as intended. SB0190 ensures that courts have the authority to uphold donor intent when it is being disregarded.

Why This Matters: Health Disparities Are Real and Persistent

The disparities this donor sought to address are well documented:

- **Life expectancy:** In 2022, Black Americans lived nearly **5 years fewer** than non-Hispanic Whites (72.8 vs. 77.5 years).
<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/blackafrican-american-health>
- **Cardiovascular disease:** Black adults are **20% more likely** to have hypertension and experience higher rates of heart disease-related death.
<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/heart-disease-and-blackafrican-americans>
- **Cancer:** Black Americans have **lower 5-year survival rates** for most cancers. Black women are **40% more likely to die from breast cancer** despite similar incidence rates.
<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/cancer-and-blackafrican-americans>
- **Mental health:** Black individuals with mental illness are less likely to receive guideline-consistent care and more likely to rely on emergency departments rather than specialty services.
<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/diversity/education/mental-health-facts>
- **Economic inequities:** Structural economic disparities worsen health outcomes and limit access to long-term care and preventive services.
<https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/how-recognizing-health-disparities-for-black-people-is-important-for-change/>

These disparities are not theoretical. They are measurable, ongoing, and deadly.

Why SB0190 Is Necessary

- Granny’s Law provides a **clear, structured legal mechanism** for courts to interpret wills using evidence of donor intent.
- It allows personal representatives to ensure that charitable gifts are used as directed.
- It protects **generational wealth** and ensures that philanthropic resources aimed at health equity are not diverted.

Addressing Common Concerns

- **“This will increase litigation.”**
The opposite is true. Clarifying intent reduces ambiguity and prevents prolonged disputes.
- **“There is no demonstrated benefit.”**
Failure to honor donor intent perpetuates inequities and undermines public trust in charitable giving.
- **“This creates administrative burden.”**
Clear standards improve efficiency and consistency in probate proceedings.

Conclusion

SB0190 is about respect—for donor intent, for the law, and for communities bearing a disproportionate burden of disease. When charitable gifts meant to reduce health disparities are misused, inequities widen. Granny’s Law ensures that does not happen.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0190.

Sincerely,



Miriam C. Purnell, Pharm.D.
University of Maryland Eastern Shore*
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions
Department of Pharmacy Practice and Administration
Chair and Professor
Program Director, PBC Rural Health Disparities and Social Inequities

**The views expressed in this testimony are my own and do not represent the views of the institution.*