

SB0190 Estates and Trusts - Interpretation of Wills - Evidence of Intent (Granny's Law)

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Support FAV

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SENATE BILL 0190 ESTATES AND TRUSTS – INTERPRETATION OF WILLS – EVIDENCE OF INTENT (GRANNY’S LAW)

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION

My name is Jesse Bennett, I am a resident of Randallstown, Baltimore County, Maryland and I am in full support of this proposed legislation. I was a Volunteer Research Coordinator for the Mount Auburn Cemetery located in the Westport community in Southwest Baltimore City, and I was a member of the Maryland Cemetery Legislative Advocates.

In my personal and advocacy positions, this legislation attempts to give an option to persons who administer estates of deceased family members other properly identified designees, an opportunity to give testimony to the deceased’s wishes.

Every deceased person’s intention, when clearly written, should not become objects of judges and lawyer’s reinterpretation. We have all heard stories of how a will can be misinterpreted, mismanaged, and actually stolen by court appointed attorneys who are charged with resolving estates.

The tragic story of how the Johnson Family’s estate was abused, and how their request to intervene in their deceased family member desires were denied, causing heartbreak, stress, economic loss because of legal defense fees as they simply tried to carry out the will of their loved one.

Many families who go through Probate to settle their loved one’s estates do not have the economic status to pursue legal remedies to contest inequities during the process.

I believe the safeguards in Senate Bill 0190 better known as Granny's Law, will improve the process for all Maryland citizens going forward.

In December of 1988 my eighty-eight years old grandmother passed away leaving a typed, signed, one-page, notarized LAST Will AND TESTIMENT with five (5) descendants listed. Two of those descendants had died, leaving me, the third name on the list, as her estate administrator.

I began the Probate process by following her listed desires, which included selling her home; distributing her assets (clothes, household goods, retrieving her insurance policy, burial expenses, and sharing the Probate financial residual funds to my siblings. While not a complicated process, I fully understand how my Granny's wishes could easily have been misinterpreted and turned into a scheme by any unscrupulous attorney for personal profit.

I make the case today, as I was very close to my grandmother and we had several discussions about her pending health condition and death; the details in her will were clear to a point. As Administrator, I had to make decisions and clarifications as she discussed directly with me, and as her listed will required. I hired a trusted attorney who listened to my discussion with my Granny. Mrs. Johnson and her family faced a terrible denial of input into her grandmother's estate. Granny's Law SB0190 will allow many Maryland families to have a say into the distribution of a relative's desires. Especially since the family understood what the decedent

Please lend your support and vote favorably on Senate Bill 0190.

Thank you for your time today.