

Written Testimony

In Support (FAV) of Senate Bill 0190 – "Granny's Law"
Maryland General Assembly

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Good afternoon, Chair, Vice Chair, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Lanise Stevenson, and I am here today in strong support of Senate Bill 0190, legislation that ensures bequests intended to address health equity are used as their donors envisioned.

I come before you not only as a complementary healthcare practitioner and researcher but also as someone whose life has been profoundly shaped by cancer. I am a survivor of thyroid cancer, and I carry within me the stories, struggles, and legacies of my grandmother, mother, aunts, cousins, and close lifelong friends, all of whom lost their battles with breast cancer. Cancer is not just a diagnosis—it is a generational burden that too often weighs heaviest on marginalized communities.

Senate Bill 0190 is a necessary safeguard to ensure that the resources meant to fight health disparities are not diverted away from their intended purpose. Too often, funding designated to advance health equity is lost in bureaucratic redirection, leaving patients, survivors, and families without the support they desperately need. For families like mine, and so many others in communities disproportionately impacted by cancer, these funds could mean access to critical screenings, life-saving treatments, culturally competent care, and survivorship programs.

When my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, she fought to access the best care, yet she faced systemic barriers that made an already difficult battle even harder. She, like many women of color, deserved equitable treatment and resources that would have given her a better fighting chance. Health equity is not a luxury—it is a right. Senate Bill 0190 honors the intent of those who bequeath funds for this purpose, ensuring that their legacy is not diluted or misused but instead fulfills its highest potential: saving lives.

As a cancer survivor and someone who has lost far too many loved ones to this disease, I urge you to pass this bill. It is not just a matter of legal clarity; it is a matter of justice. We must honor the wishes of those who seek to eliminate health disparities, just as we honor the lives of those who have been lost too soon.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to health equity in Maryland.