

## SHEILA OWENS-COLLINS, MD, MPH, MBA



Neonatal Perinatal Medicine Consultant  
Pediatrician, T1D Veteran Mom + Author

15626 Gold Ring Way  
Derwood, MD. 20855

618-303-9627  
sowenscollins@gmail.com  
[www.sheilaowenscollins.com](http://www.sheilaowenscollins.com)

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### **Re: Proposed Granny's Law Legislation**

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

I write to you today in strong support of "Granny's Bill," also known as the "I Mean What I Sign" legislation. As a physician, public health expert, and advocate for vulnerable populations, I am deeply committed to protecting the rights, dignity, and legacies of our elders.

My perspective is both professional and deeply personal. My family and I experienced firsthand the devastating power that unchecked probate courts can wield. In Harris County, Texas, despite my mother's will clearly naming me as executor and my son as alternate, the court attempted to disregard my mother's explicit wishes and turn her estate over to the State. When no attorney was willing to take on the challenge of contesting a sitting judge, I represented myself as a pro se litigant. Through persistence and faith, I filed federal legal action and a motion for recusal, and the judge ultimately stepped aside. A new judge rightly honored my mother's will, returning the control of her estate to our family, as she had intended.

This journey, which I chronicle in my book, *Justice Served: How I Represented Myself to Victory*, is not unique to Texas. Across this country, families find themselves fighting for the simple dignity of having their loved ones' last wishes respected. Too often, these battles expose systemic flaws—where courts override valid wills, strip families of agency, and allow financial exploitation through excessive legal fees.

"Granny's Bill" is a necessary and urgent reform, enacting the guardrails needed to ensure Maryland's elders are respected, their voices heard, and their legacies protected. Essential reforms—such as upholding testamentary intent as affirmed in cases like *Goeber v. Goeber*, limiting excessive fees, and involving both family and independent professionals in oversight—would directly address the very injustices I and so many others have endured.

I urge you to pass "Granny's Bill" as an act of dignity and justice for Maryland's elders. By doing so, you ensure that the final act of respect for a life well lived is to honor their last will and testament, including their chosen executors. Let us stand together to protect their legacies and uphold the rights enshrined in our Constitution.

Respectfully,

*/s/Sheila Owens-Collins, MD, MPH, MBA, CPHQ*