

HB0375 Testimony FAV in Support of Granny's Law

To the House Judiciary Committee

Greetings

My name is Robert Alex Stubblefield and I am a poet, lay minister, activist-organizer with organizations such as the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition, Montgomery County Chapter of DSA, The Black United Front of Moco, Young People for Progress among others orgs. Additionally, I am a lifelong Maryland resident and I am writing in favor of HB0375, Granny's Law. It is high time that there is legislation in place to protect our caregivers and empower them as they get elderly.

The first reason why I support this bill is because the current system is flawed on purpose. The history of probate court comes from a ugly history of ancient Rome, Medieval England, and Colonial America that only benefitted wealthy men while women, other lower classes and enslaved were treated as mere property. In other words, what they desired for their descendants in the case of caregiving and the disbursement of property was not in their control and that it served to increase the wealth of those already in power. Fast forward to today, we see that decedent's today even if it they state in their will that a loved one is to be in charge of the estate and disbursement of assets, probate court takes that away. That is wrong on a few levels: on one level it totally disrespects the wishes of the dead which is what we as a society claim to hold sacrosanct. The second reason why this is wrong is because it takes away time, money and resources from the family in question as they're trying to grieve and now have to go through a process that is unjust. Third and lastly, it creates trauma for the family.

What Granny's law seeks to do is empower caregivers, the majority which are women, with being able to serve as a personal representative to interpret the decedent's will as to the decedent's intent. This is powerful because it will allow families to focus on handling of a passed one's estate without having the added stress of probate court. Additionally it will right historic wrongs by establishing a new paradigm in which an outdate system no longer has that much power or say in family's affairs when it comes to wills. This is long overdue.

Thank you

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