



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB0917 - Transport of a Body After Anatomical Gift – Fees
– Prohibition
Before the Finance Committee
on March 6, 2020**

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice chair, and Members of the Committee:

This bill proposes to allow friends or family members to claim the remains of their loved ones after organ donation or other medical research without a fee from the transporting entity.

Once a person decides to make this profound gift, literally of their own body, their families should not have to pay a fee for the transportation of the body to claim the remains. As the law stands, if the bereaved cannot afford the cost - from \$150, that body is cremated and buried in a mass grave. This is no way to show gratitude for such a selfless act.

Unfortunately, we do not have a fiscal note to give us details on the implementation of this bill.

Also, in researching this bill, we have come across a bigger issue relating to the rapid disposition of unclaimed bodies. I have submitted an amendment to this bill to address this serious problem.

That problem is that a body must be taken to a funeral home within 72 hours or the State Anatomy Board. If it is not, it is deemed an unclaimed body and becomes property of the State. From there, gaining custody of the remains is very difficult, if not impossible. And there are fees associated with this whole process. This is unduly burdensome on families or friends who might not even be aware of the death. Coming up with the costs in short notice can be untenable, as well. The amended bill proposes to extend that timeline to 15 days and waive fees for the indigent as much as possible.

As a State, we can do better for our citizens. I urge a favorable report on this bill.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill P. Carter