

In Support of Repealing the Inheritance Tax in Maryland

Dear Committee Members,

I am a 40-year-old resident of Maryland. I was born in DC and promptly driven from the hospital to my parents' townhouse in Prince George's County. With only a few short intermissions, I have remained in Maryland for the vast majority of my life.

In 2012, my grandfather died after battling brain cancer. My family and I were living with my parents at the time in a large house. He received hospice care for 11 months in their house while we lived with them. I was home with my new baby at the time. I had been unable to find work as a state certified teacher in the year before due to the state freezes on hiring that occurred during that time, so I spent a year caring for my new baby and being around while nurses cared for my grandfather. I was blessed to spend those last months of his life with him.

He was a loving and frugal man. He owned a business and he treated his employees with respect and dignity. I worked in the family business as a teen and young adult. I was paid \$15/hour for this work.

My grandmother gave me 10k to buy a house in 2005. That is the only inheritance I have ever received.

I didn't directly inherit anything when my grandfather died. What did happen, however, was that people who knew him or knew of him began patronizing me. They lied to me and told me that my five year old had a disease that he didn't have. Some of them were private and public school administrators. They told me that my son couldn't attend normal schools due to his disability and that the only school that he could attend cost over 40k/year. My mother and I split the tuition for seven years until I sought testing for my son in Pennsylvania by child development expert there and learned that he did not, in fact, have a disability at all. These events occurred in the early-late 2010s. My son is a junior in high school now and will be taking his first AP tests in a Maryland Public School in May. He can drive and competes in swimming with his friends. He successfully took his first SAT in a Maryland Public School last March.

In revisiting what I was told by these so-called child development experts, I realized that they believed that I inherited money from my grandfather when he died and they assumed that I was using that money to pay the lofty tuition. They were wrong. We were paying out of my husband's income and my mother was paying her share out of her income from the business as she wound it down.

While I have not directly been impacted by the inheritance tax in Maryland as it stands today, I know what it is like to be harassed and threatened when a relative dies. I don't want to see families who are successful driven from our state because our laws are no better than the gossips and jealous people who used my five-year-old child to defraud me of 175k of income because they incorrectly assumed that I inherited it. No Maryland resident should have to spend down their money before they die in order to stay here and in order for their family to stay here. We have to change the culture of greed and envy in order to keep Marylanders in Maryland. Repealing this inheritance tax is a start.

With respect,
Kimberly Lepine (Bulka)