



# ***Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maryland and Environs***

*Protecting a consumer's right to a meaningful, dignified, and affordable funeral.*

## **SB 433 - Support**

**Senate Committee on Finance**  
Of the Maryland General Assembly

March 5, 2015

Testimony by: Brian T, Kildee, FCAME Board Member

Chairman Middleton, Vice Chair Astle and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony from the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maryland & Environs in support of SB 433, concerning the identification and disposition of unclaimed cremated human remains held by licensed funeral establishments or holders of permits to operate crematories that are unclaimed after 90 days. In such cases, the funeral establishment licensee or crematory permit holder must notify the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs or a local veterans' service organization of that fact and provide identifying information about the individual who was cremated. If the Department or the local service organization identifies the remains as those of a veteran or eligible dependent, the licensee or permit holder may transfer the remains to that organization for disposition, including burial in a veterans cemetery if eligible.

This bill is consistent with Maryland's continuing and proper recognition of those who have served the nation in uniform and, accordingly, we support its adoption. In this regard, Maryland recognition of those who served in the military is broad based and includes such things as the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home serving older veterans and Maryland's Department of Veterans Affairs which provides counseling and other services supporting the special needs of veterans of all ages.

More pertinent, however, is the fact that Maryland has established and maintains six cemeteries that provide dignified and compassionate resting places for our deceased veterans and their qualified dependents. We think it is entirely appropriate for your Committee to approve a measure which will ensure that cremated remains identified as those of a veteran or eligible dependent may be respectfully interred in a veterans cemetery.

The Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maryland & Environs encourages this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 433.

*FCAME is the volunteer-run, regional chapter of the Funeral Consumers Alliance (FCA), the oldest and largest consumer protection organization focused solely on guarding the rights (and wallets) of grieving consumers. FCA's many chapters across the country are dedicated to: helping consumers be more informed about death care options, and protecting the public from fraud and abuse in cremation, funeral and burial transactions. FCA and its chapters take no money from the death care industry or government.*

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