

To Whom It May Concern:

November 26, 2018

This letter is written in support of H.B. No. 454, sponsored by Representatives Patterson and Arndt, co sponsored by Representatives Ashford, Seitz, Becker, and Reece, and currently under consideration by the 132nd General Assembly.

As a native of Ohio, having lived in the state for 68 of my almost 76 years, I know that I must make plans for my final resting place. This pre-planning not only allows my wishes to be fulfilled, but eliminates my loved ones of the burden that accompanies the death of a loved one and eliminates family questions of regarding final arrangements. I have many fond memories of growing up in a small Ohio town where almost everyone knew everyone. My grandfather and his brother owned and operated a grocery store on the town square. My father also had a sweet shop on the square, which he gave up when WWII dictated that he help with the war effort (nearly at the time I was born). My grandfather's home was adjacent to the locations where this cemetery (and the location of my desired resting place) exists. Near or on his property is a large hickory tree (still stands) where my father and I harvested many hickory nuts and he would tell me about collecting them and selling his harvest to buy a pair of winter boots. My father and I also made trips to the blackberry patch to the northwest of the cemetery property. Additionally, we often visited the graves of my ancestors to place flowers and manicure the lot. I have many happy childhood memories of times spent in the woods surrounding the cemetery, playing with boyhood friends. To this day, I find myself walking around the old section seeing the graves of those from my early childhood and recalling where they lived and what they did for a livelihood.

Among family located in this cemetery are my parents, my sister, and her husband and numerous ancestors, including my grandfather and his father (my great-grandfather) who fought in 24 battles (including Gettysburg) of the Civil War on the side of the Union Army. In later years, when visiting the graves of my ancestors, I always noticed that there were no markers on the lots immediately behind those of my forefathers. These lots are in an original section of the old cemetery. It occurred to me that perhaps they had been abandoned and could be resold. In 2009 I was able to obtain information that my grandfather purchased the family plot in 1907, shortly before the death of his wife (my grandmother). In addition, I also found through cemetery officials that the lots I was in hopes of procuring were sold in 1910 and according to the Ohio Revised Code it was impossible to do anything with cemetery lots sold before July 26, 1986. I was shocked that there appeared to be many vacant spaces as I wandered through the old section of this cemetery and thought that many township in Ohio would be glad to gain some revenue from the resale of these vacant burial plots. I had not looked at O.R.C. since that date (2009) but decided to try to find relatives of the lady who purchased the 1910 lots. I was able to find through genealogical searches that the husband died in 1910, shortly after the purchase of the Ohio cemetery plots. The lady who purchased the 1910 lots did so in what I believe was her maiden name and she passed in 1929. Also her husband used two different spellings for his last name. They are buried in Cornwallville Cemetery in New York state. As a result of the these facts, I have been unable to find relatives of the purchaser of the 1910 Ohio cemetery lots from which I might purchase these lots adjacent to my family's burial plot.