

Guv candidate Quinn weighs in on Anatomy Board ceremony

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To the Editor:

There are many times in life that revealing a truth will cause one to walk a thin line. Monday June 19th was one of those days for me. The Memorial service by the Anatomy Board of Maryland took place in Sykesville on a cloudy, but cool, day. On the surface it appears that Ronn Wade the director of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene State Anatomy Board had a ceremony to honor those who have donated their bodies for medical science. He went to great lengths to have medical students come to the service and tell family members how grateful they are. So with only this information many don't understand how anyone would have a problem with this ceremony. The fact is that the ceremony is not the problem. The problems start with the fact that not all the bodies are donated.

The State Anatomy Board only allows 72 hours for someone to claim a body that has found its way to Baltimore. Even if you find your loved one in that 72 hours they may not be released to you. The State Anatomy Board also does very little to identify or find loved ones to claim a body when it shows up at the Anatomy Board. There are many stories out there of family members unable to get the remains of their loved ones. In the words of Ronn Wade, as stated in the Carroll County Times, "Bodies belonging to the Anatomy Board are used in training medical students schools, trauma training, surgeon training and military medical programs throughout the state." The truth is he can do what he pleases to these bodies. He goes on to state that many bodies come from donors while others belong to people who have not been claimed by family members. It seems any body that ends up at the State Anatomy Board becomes his property.

My concerns are purely about those other bodies that more than likely have family. Those families not given the time or effort to identify and claim their loved one. As a Libertarian I strongly feel that one's body is one's property. No one has the right to take that property even in death. Because of this belief I stood with protesters after the ceremony ended to spread this information. I think it is very important that people get the whole story. I was very happy that for the most part it was a silent protest with hand-held signs. I was able to talk to some of the guests and explain what was being protested; reassuring them that donated bodies were not the issue. It is my hope that in the future the State Anatomy Board will become more open with the number of persons they take in and any money received from selling these bodies. In this day and age it should be pretty easy to identify and notify next of kin. Something that any decent person would do and something our government should insist of its employees.

As your Governor I would see to it that the Anatomy Board identified each person that comes to them. I would insist that a notice be sent to that person's home town paper and every effort be made to locate next of kin before any action is made with that person's body. I would also not allow anyone's body to be used for science without a donation consent or release for donation by family members. I would insist that the Anatomy Board's first action always be a "release of the body" to any family member of the deceased. I also have a problem with all of these people being dumped in a single bore hole. The dead deserve better as every single "body" is a son or daughter who once had dreams, ambitions, families, and friends. I think a good start would be to support and pass the "Nancy Law" bill that fell on deaf ears in the General Assembly. Ronn Wade is acting like a grave robber by not doing these simple things and it must stop.

For those who have chosen to donate for science, I salute you. These schools salute you. I do however beg you to remember that you made a choice that many others were not given because they have no voice with Ronn Wade. Please think how you would feel if the Anatomy Board had simply taken your loved one, cut them up, and sold them whole or in pieces to wherever. Not a nice thought, but it sums up what happens to those who are not found in 72 hours of arriving at the Anatomy Board. I offer you my condolences in your loss of loved ones. Bless you all.

Shawn Quinn,
Candidate for Governor of Maryland

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