

Date: March 4, 2020

Bill: House Bill 1003: Human Services – Department of Disabilities – Accessibility Programs

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: Support

Dear Chair Kelley,

I am Jason Corning, I am deafblind and I serve on the Governor Advisory Board of Telecommunication Relay. I am writing in support of HB1003, a bill that makes some important improvements to Telecommunications Access of Maryland's (TAM) ability to serve Marylanders who are Deaf, Deafblind, hard of hearing, or have any other speech disability

TAM is important to me because it currently provides technology such as braille TTY or text telephone for Deafblind users which allows the user to type their side of a conversation, and a Braille display for reading the other person's response.

I support HB1003 because of the inclusion of the Deafblind communication facilitator program. Among users of telecommunications relay services nationally, the Deafblind are some of the most underserved. I serve the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay as a member representing the Deafblind community, and I have advocated for a Deafblind facilitator program for years as it is such a vital need among the Deafblind community, which would benefit directly from the program.

I support the TAM program and believe that it is time to give the TAM program the support it needs to better serve all stakeholders, including those who have waited a long time, and have advocated strongly over the years, for the Deafblind communication facilitator program. It's time to make Maryland more accessible for all stakeholders.

For the reasons mentioned, I respectfully ask for a favorable report for HB1003.

If you have any question please contact me at jacorning@gmail.com and I will be glad to discuss this with you. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,
Jason Corning