



WE MAKE MOVIES BETTER™

February 6, 2023

**Maryland House Bill 264 – Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses –
Captioning
Before the House Economic Matters Committee
Position: Oppose**

On behalf of AMC Theatres, the largest theatrical exhibitor in the State of Maryland and the United States, we respectfully request that you oppose HB 264. Since AMC is already providing open caption showtimes voluntarily and complies with federal law on accessibility, this legislation is unnecessary.

Inclusive programming is core to AMC's strategy, and we are proud to lead the theatrical exhibition industry by making open caption showtimes available in the state of Maryland. Currently, guests at 7 AMC locations within the state can find clearly marked open caption showtimes at AMCTheaters.com and on the AMC mobile app. The showtimes currently represent a mix of weekend and weekdays, evenings, and matinees, and are expected to evolve with movie-going demand and guest feedback.

In addition to public showtimes, open captions are also available through AMC's Private Theatre Rentals program and group open caption requests. While AMC is excited to offer open captioning for those guests who desire this format, substantially all showtimes at AMC will continue to be offered with closed captioning, which allows audience members to attend all shows at every time without any disruption in ticket sales. Therefore, AMC will continue to have closed captioning and assisted listening devices available at all its locations in the state.

By allowing AMC to offer open caption showings on a voluntary basis, rather than a mandated basis, it allows us to react to actual demand and adjust the number of screenings and the showtimes as appropriate. Although so many industries were affected by the pandemic, cinemas were hit particularly hard as our movie theaters were closed for approximately fifty weeks due to the pandemic. As we economically recover from a period of time in which we had zero income, flexibility in scheduling is paramount.

Our industry remains under significant pressure which has lead Regal, the 2nd largest global movie theater chain to file for chapter 11 bankruptcy and we have seen Pacific Arclight and New Vision liquidated in bankruptcy. In order to avoid other permanent closures, flexibility in programming is critical as movie theaters are very capital intensive to operate.

In conclusion, we believe that our voluntary open caption program meets consumer demand as opposed to a rigid mandate that would be economically damaging and unnecessary. Therefore, we respectfully request that you oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

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