

January 26, 2024

TO: Honorable Benjamin S. Barnes and Honorable Mark S. Chang  
RE: HB 98

Dear Chairman Barnes and Vice Chairman Chang:

My name is Shane Dundas, I'm a resident of Frederick and a citizen of the state of Maryland. I am thrilled to be testifying in favor of the House Bill 98 regarding the CoNavigation for the DeafBlind Marylanders.

I've been thrice trained Co-Navigator for many years volunteering for the DeafBlind community. I can see so much joy in DeafBlind people when they feel like they have full autonomy by using my services.

I know that the hearing Blind community have better access to visual information through environmental sounds, verbal conversations with people surrounding them, and may have other programs that assist them. DeafBlind do not hear, they use tactile sign language or ProTactile ASL. They rely on PTASL for visual information, that is where CN comes in.

By using CN services, it allows DeafBlind people to come out of isolation and become part of an active and thriving community as outstanding citizens. It not only benefits the DeafBlind people but also benefits those who interact with them. Can you imagine how many bridges are being built between the DeafBlind citizens and the community by using CN services?

This Bill 98 is historic in the State of Maryland! I am elated that we have arrived at this point. I hope that you will support HB 98 today and I look forward to its passage into law this Spring. I thank all the committee members here today, especially His Honorable Aaron M. Kaufman for his tremendous support and leadership for this House Bill 98.

Thank you.

Shane Dundas