

February 6, 2024

Economic Matters Committee
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Economic Matters Committee:

We are writing on behalf of Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) and with support from all the organizations that serve communities in the State of Maryland. We are asking you to support **HB 426** - Open Captioning Movies Bill, sponsored by Delegate Harry Bhandari. This bill will require all motion picture houses to offer open captioning for each screening of a motion picture all day two times per week. This will give the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community more access to watch the movies. Right now, the rule doesn't require the movie theater to provide the access.

Captioning, also known as same-language subtitles, benefits everyone who are children, adolescents, college students, adults and foreign people who are learning to read and write English. More than 100 empirical studies document that captioning a video improves comprehension of, attention to, and memory for the video. Captions are particularly beneficial for persons watching videos in their non-native language, for children and adults learning to read, and for persons who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.

Most importantly, the bill provides communities with the assurance and peace of mind that they have access to the movie without using devices or other methods same as other people who go to the movie.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter and we appreciate your support on HB 426.

Sincerely,

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