



INSTITUTE FOR
Evangelization
ARCHDIOCESE of BALTIMORE

January 31, 2024

Dear Maryland Legislature:

I am writing on behalf of Deaf Ministry - Archdiocese of Baltimore in support of HB 426 and SB 92-Open Captioning Movie Bill, sponsored by Delegate Harry Bhandari and Senator Benjamin Brooks. The Bill would require each movie theater to add onscreen captions on all movies at least two (2) times per week, in an effort to make moviegoing more accessible.

Deaf Ministry - Archdiocese of Baltimore serves Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals from Western Maryland to the Chesapeake Bay. Twenty percent of individuals have a hearing loss. It is important that they have full access to the movies shown in theaters.

Many people would benefit from onscreen captioning of movies. We have members and family members who are deaf, who are hard of hearing, who are neurodivergent, learning to read, learning English, and/or elderly. These are just some of the people who would benefit from onscreen captioning. Many hearing people also appreciate captions so they don't miss dialogue in movies.

Current mandated technologies, including glasses or "cup holder" technologies are often difficult to use and provide a sub-optimal viewing experience for users, since they must attempt to view the movie and captioning through these devices at the same time. They may also be uncomfortable with disclosing their disability to the theater.

Showing onscreen captioned movies twice per week would allow all moviegoers the opportunity to better understand the dialogue of the movie they are watching. Millions of people use onscreen captioning when watching television at home for this reason.

We are therefore supportive of HB 426 and SB-92 and hope that the Bill moves forward as it would allow more people to fully experience and enjoy movies in Maryland – benefiting residents, visitors, and movie theaters.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

Chris Duck
Coordinator of Deaf Ministry
Archdiocese of Baltimore