



Maryland Continuing Care Residents Association

The Voice of Continuing Care Residents

SUBJECT: House Bill 426 - Places of Public Accommodation – Motion Picture Houses – Captioning
COMMITTEE: Economic Matters Committee, The Honorable C. T. Wilson, Chair
DATE: Tuesday, February 6, 2024
POSITION: FAVORABLE

The **Maryland Continuing Care Residents Association (MaCCRA)** is a not-for-profit organization representing the residents in continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs). Maryland has over 18,000 older adults living in CCRCs. The principal mission of MaCCRA is to protect and enhance the rights and financial security of current and future residents while maintaining the viability of the providers whose interests are frequently the same as their residents. MaCCRA supports efforts to enhance transparency, accountability, financial security, and to create and preserve existing protections in law and regulation for current and future CCRC residents statewide.

On behalf of Maryland Continuing Care Residents, we support House Bill 426, which requires Maryland movie theaters to offer closed captions on all screenings, and theater chains with two or more locations to provide two open-captioned screenings each week.

A substantial proportion of the population we represent suffer from hearing deficits, yet wish to continue to enjoy a full life, including going to the movies. Without captioning and being unable to hear and understand dialogue, there is no point for them in buying a ticket to a movie. While the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requires movie theaters to provide closed captioning, many theaters currently have equipment that does not work properly or does not work at all. More importantly, even when in good repair, using these devices is cumbersome, inconvenient, and often difficult. Looking back and forth between the device and the screen interferes with full comprehension and pleasurable viewing. Having open captions provides a very welcome alternative to using these devices and makes going to the movies once again possible and enjoyable.

Captions benefit many people, not only elders who struggle with hearing loss, but other deaf and hard of hearing viewers. In addition, those learning English, those who have auditory processing issues, those who struggle with accents, and people learning to read find captions helpful if not essential.

For these reasons we support House Bill 426 and ask for a favorable report.

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