



DATE: February 6, 2024 **COMMITTEE:** House Economic Matters
BILL NO: House Bill 426
BILL TITLE: Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses - Captioning
POSITION: Support

Kennedy Krieger Institute supports House Bill 426 - Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses - Captioning

Bill Summary:

House Bill 426 would require all motion picture houses in Maryland to offer closed captioning through functional assistive devices for each screening of a motion picture. Additionally, any franchise that operates more than two motion pictures in the state will offer at least two open captioned screenings per week, per movie.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute provides specialized services to patients nationally and internationally. Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental, behavioral, cognitive and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger's services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based and community-based programs.

The Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) at Kennedy Krieger Institute is proud to be Maryland's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) and a member of the national Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD).

MCDD links the community to vital services, research and information to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Our mission is to provide leadership that advances the inclusion of people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities through preservice preparation and training; research and evaluation; community service and technical assistance; and information dissemination.

Rationale:

Kennedy Krieger supports HB 426, which will ensure that all movie theaters in the state of Maryland will provide closed captioning, as well as opportunities for open captioning of a subset of movies shown in movie theaters. The benefit of closed captioning availability through assisted devices is straightforward and fundamental. The open captioned movies will be hugely beneficial for individuals that are deaf or hard of hearing. It will also benefit people of all ages, including children, adults, second language learners, people with reading challenges, and more. This legislation will ensure that all Marylanders have the pleasure of fully engaging in leisure activities, such as experiencing being part of the audience in movie theaters, offered in our communities.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on House Bill 426.