

Subject: Support for SB0185/HB0098

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From: Heather Guy, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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To: House Appropriations Committee

I am testifying for this bill as a member of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland. Please support SB0185/HB0098, a bill to create the co-navigation program for deafblind people in Maryland. I began losing my hearing when I was four years old and have been wearing hearing aids continuously since that time. I began losing my sight when I was a teenager. Getting access to information is very difficult for me and a co-navigator could be helpful. I am a wife, a parent, and an employed adult. I want to become more active in community life but cannot because of the lack of a co-navigator.

I am glad that the bill says that this will be a statewide program, I hope that it really will become statewide. Living on the Eastern Shore, we do not get many helpful programs that are otherwise found in the rest of the state.

Please vote in favor of SB0185/HB0098. Give me and the deafblind community a chance to receive important information so that we can participate in all aspects of community life. This will be an important step towards equality.