



People on the Go of Maryland

SB 185

**Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing -
Deaf/Blind Co-Navigation Program - Established**

Establishing a Deaf/Blind Co-Navigation Services Program in the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, to provide co-navigation services at no cost to deaf/blind individuals in the State; and defining Co-Navigation Services as services providing visual and environmental information or sighted services to assist with communication accessibility in an individual's preferred language and communication mode, and to assist with accessing an individual's physical surroundings and making informed decisions about those surroundings.

Position: Support

January 30, 2024

Sponsored by Delegate Kaufman

Assigned to House Appropriations Committee

Written by Cody Drinkwater

People On the Go of Maryland

Honorable Chairperson, and distinguished members of the House Appropriations Committee:

People On the Go of Maryland (POG) is a statewide self-advocacy organization, ran for and by those with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) and our mission is to promote self-advocacy throughout the state.

People On the Go provides this written testimony and support for Senate Bill 185 (SB185). We support this bill because:

- Any bill that promotes accessible technology for those who are deaf/blind and hard of hearing should be supported.
- Co-navigation services would be free of charge for those who are deaf/blind and hard of hearing, who would otherwise have to rely upon technology that can be prohibitively expensive.
- A policy of making co-navigation services free to the deaf/blind and hard of hearing, also sets a good precedent for any future bills regarding accessible technology.

For these reasons, People On the Go advises a favorable report for SB 185. Thank you for your consideration.

Should you have any questions. Please contact Mat Rice.

Thank you,

Mat Rice, Executive Director

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