



**Maryland Association of the Deaf**  
**Written Testimony**  
**SB 358 – Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library**  
**Funding and Budget Submission**  
**Wednesday, January 5, 2025**  
**Position: Favorable**

**President**

Tina Joyner

The Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) is a statewide organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders, with a particular focus on accessibility and equality.

**Vice President**

Jacob Leffler

MDAD strongly supports SB 358, sponsored by Senator King, as it directly addresses a critical need for our community—the continued growth and accessibility of the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL). Established through years of advocacy, the DCDL has become an essential resource, ensuring that our community has access to vital information that is otherwise scarce or inaccessible.

**Secretary**

Tiasha Bera

The DCDL has consistently provided high-quality content, updating its website monthly to celebrate Deaf culture, raise awareness of significant historical events, and highlight important holidays from a Deaf perspective. The library’s centralized calendar of ASL- and Deaf-friendly events has become a cornerstone for community engagement, fostering inclusion and creating essential opportunities for connection. Additionally, by improving accessibility features such as alt text for DeafBlind users, the DCDL has proven its commitment to ensuring that no one in our community is left behind.

**Treasurer**

Allysa Dittmar

However, the work is not finished. The funding proposed by SB 358 will enable the DCDL to expand these vital services and increase accessibility, ensuring even more resources are available to those who need them. This bill will not only continue to serve our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing population but will also create new opportunities for those seeking to learn American Sign Language (ASL), further strengthening our community and its capacity for growth.

**Board Members**

Meredith DeSomma

Vikki Porter

Blaise Delahoussaye

Philip Mecham

Thelma Schroeder

We urge you to recognize the profound impact of this legislation and support SB 358, ensuring that the DCDL can continue to thrive and expand its mission. A favorable outcome is essential for the future of our community, and we stand firm in our commitment to seeing this critical resource succeed.

We look forward to a favorable outcome to SB 358.

MDAD Board of Directors