



State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

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**Senate Bill 665 – Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Maryland
Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing – Renaming
Position: Favorable**

Dear Chairperson Feldman, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for enforcing Maryland’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, state contracts, commercial leasing, and health services based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, source of income, and military status.

Senate Bill 665 updates the names of both the Governor’s Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (“ODHH”) and the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing (“MACDHH”) so they recognize the deafblind constituency that is core to their work.

MCCR partners closely with ODHH and serves as a State agency representative on the MACDHH, all in order to promote and improve civil rights for the constituencies we represent and serve. MCCR knows firsthand the criticality of issues that the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing communities encounter throughout society. The inclusion of “deafblind” within the names for both ODHH and MACDHH not only better represents their service and advocacy, but also clearly signals to Marylanders where they can go for help if they encounter a barrier or are in need of assistance.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SB665. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. MCCR looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to promote and improve civil rights in Maryland.

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”

William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900, Baltimore, Maryland 21202-1631
Phone: 410-767-8600 · Toll Free: 1-800-637-6247 · Maryland Relay: 711 · Fax: 410-333-1841
Website: mccr.maryland.gov · E-Mail: mccr@maryland.gov