



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Sponsor Testimony in Support of SB 665
Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard
of Hearing – Renaming
February 26, 2026

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

SB 665 seeks to rename the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Maryland's current statutory title, the Governor's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, does not explicitly recognize Deafblind Marylanders, despite the office routinely supporting individuals with combined vision and hearing loss. This mismatch between name and mission can create confusion for residents seeking services and for agencies that partner with the office.

This legislation makes a simple, technical correction: it changes the name of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to Office of the Office of Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing and it changes the name of the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing to the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing. This bill updates references across the Maryland Code to ensure consistency. Nothing in the bill changes the office's duties, authority, or staffing. It simply brings statutory language into alignment with the communities served and improves clarity for families, providers, and state agencies.

The need for this change was reinforced by the recent workgroup for the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing, which recommended updating the office's name so that state materials clearly reflect the population served and reduce confusion for Deafblind residents seeking navigation support. Other states including Colorado, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island use naming conventions that explicitly include Deafblind communities, mirroring a national trend toward clearer and more inclusive terminology in accessibility-focused agencies.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report of HB665.