

HOUSE BILL 1187

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P1

2001 Regular Session  
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CF 1r1780

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By: **Delegates R. Baker, Gladden, Pitkin, Hubbard, Proctor, Frush, Menes,  
Patterson, Howard, Benson, Moe, Dembrow, Brown, Valderrama, and  
Conroy**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2001  
Assigned to: Environmental Matters

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

3 FOR the purpose of creating the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as a principal  
4 office in the Executive Department to serve deaf and hard of hearing  
5 individuals; providing for the appointment, qualifications, powers, duties, and  
6 salary of the Director of the Office; and providing for the duties of the Office.

7 BY adding to

8 Article 41 - Governor - Executive and Administrative Departments  
9 Section 10-201 through 10-203, inclusive, to be under the new subtitle "Subtitle  
10 2. Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing"  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (1997 Replacement Volume and 2000 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
14 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article 41 - Governor - Executive and Administrative Departments**

16 SUBTITLE 2. OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING.

17 10-201.

18 (A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
19 INDICATED.

20 (B) "OFFICE" MEANS THE OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING IN  
21 THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.

22 (C) "DIRECTOR" MEANS THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND  
23 HARD OF HEARING.

1 (D) (1) "DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS" MEANS THOSE  
2 RESIDENTS OF MARYLAND WHO HAVE A PARTIAL OR COMPLETE LOSS OF HEARING.

3 (2) "DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS" INCLUDES THE DEAF,  
4 THE HARD OF HEARING, AND THE LATE-DEAFENED.

5 10-202.

6 (A) THERE IS AN OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING.

7 (B) (1) THE HEAD OF THE OFFICE IS THE DIRECTOR.

8 (2) (I) THE DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR WITH THE  
9 ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE SENATE.

10 (II) THE DIRECTOR SERVES AT THE PLEASURE OF THE GOVERNOR  
11 AND IS RESPONSIBLE DIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNOR.

12 (3) THE DIRECTOR SHALL BE:

13 (I) A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING PERSON; AND

14 (II) KNOWLEDGEABLE AND EXPERIENCED WITH ISSUES  
15 AFFECTING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS.

16 (4) THE DIRECTOR IS ENTITLED TO THE SALARY PROVIDED IN THE  
17 STATE BUDGET.

18 (C) (1) THE DIRECTOR SHALL:

19 (I) ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON ALL MATTERS ASSIGNED TO THE  
20 OFFICE;

21 (II) CARRY OUT THE GOVERNOR'S POLICIES ON THE MATTERS  
22 ASSIGNED TO THE OFFICE;

23 (III) MANAGE THE OPERATION OF THE OFFICE AND ESTABLISH  
24 GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE THE ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT  
25 OPERATION OF THE OFFICE; AND

26 (IV) ADOPT REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE  
27 PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.

28 (2) SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE DIRECTOR  
29 MAY ESTABLISH, REORGANIZE, OR CONSOLIDATE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE  
30 OFFICE AS NECESSARY TO FULFILL THE RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED BY THE  
31 DIRECTOR.

1 10-203.

2 (A) THE OFFICE SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING THE GENERAL  
3 WELFARE OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE.

4 (B) THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICE SHALL INCLUDE:

5 (1) PROVIDING, ADVOCATING, AND COORDINATING THE ADOPTION OF  
6 PUBLIC POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND PROGRAMS THAT WILL BENEFIT DEAF AND  
7 HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

8 (2) IMPROVING ACCESS TO COMMUNICATION AND TO EXISTING  
9 SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

10 (3) PROVIDING DIRECT SERVICES TO DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
11 INDIVIDUALS AS APPROPRIATE;

12 (4) INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE NEEDS AND ISSUES  
13 AFFECTING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

14 (5) WORKING WITH STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES TO ENSURE ACCESS  
15 FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS TO SAFETY AND EMERGENCY  
16 SERVICES, INCLUDING THE ACQUISITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF VISUAL SMOKE  
17 DETECTORS;

18 (6) DEVELOPING A REFERRAL SERVICE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF  
19 HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

20 (7) SERVING AS AN INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE ON THE NEEDS AND  
21 ISSUES AFFECTING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

22 (8) WORKING TO INCREASE ACCESS FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
23 INDIVIDUALS TO EDUCATIONAL, HEALTH, AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES;

24 (9) WORKING WITH PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS, THE FEDERAL  
25 GOVERNMENT, AND OTHER UNITS OF STATE GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC  
26 DEVELOPMENT FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

27 (10) WORKING TO ELIMINATE THE UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND  
28 UNEMPLOYMENT OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

29 (11) PROVIDING A NETWORK THROUGH WHICH SERVICES PROVIDED BY  
30 STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS SERVING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
31 INDIVIDUALS CAN BE CHANNLED; AND

32 (12) PROMOTING COMPLIANCE WITH STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL LAWS  
33 AND POLICIES PROTECTING AND SERVING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
34 INDIVIDUALS.

35 (C) THE OFFICE SHALL HOLD AT LEAST TWO PUBLIC TOWN HALL MEETINGS  
36 EACH YEAR TO RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS ON:

1 (1) THE QUALITY OF STATE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AFFECTING DEAF  
2 AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

3 (2) THE FUNCTIONS AND OPERATIONS OF THE OFFICE; AND

4 (3) ANY OTHER ISSUES THAT AFFECT DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
5 INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING THOSE SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.

6 (D) THE OFFICE SHALL:

7 (1) HELP FACILITATE THE APPROPRIATE DELIVERY OF STATE, LOCAL,  
8 AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES TO DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

9 (2) ADVISE OTHER UNITS OF STATE GOVERNMENT AND THE GENERAL  
10 ASSEMBLY ON THE NEEDS OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

11 (3) SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATIONS IN THE STATE BUDGET, PROVIDE ANY  
12 REASONABLE RESOURCES THAT ANY OTHER UNIT OF STATE GOVERNMENT  
13 REQUESTS TO SERVE OR ASSIST DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS; AND

14 (4) TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY  
15 DUPLICATION OF EFFORT, COORDINATE WITH OTHER UNITS OF THE STATE AND THE  
16 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THE SERVICES PROVIDED TO DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING  
17 INDIVIDUALS.

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
19 October 1, 2001.