

SENATE BILL 407

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2001 Regular Session
1r1780
CF 1r2209

By: **Senators Ferguson, Bromwell, Currie, DeGrange, Green, Hogan,
Hooper, Jacobs, Madden, Mitchell, Mooney, Roesser, Ruben, and Stone**
Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2001
Assigned to: Economic and Environmental Affairs

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.

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

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

3 10-202.

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

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

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

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

10 (3) THE DIRECTOR SHALL BE:

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

12 (II) KNOWLEDGEABLE AND EXPERIENCED WITH ISSUES
13 AFFECTING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS.

14 (4) THE DIRECTOR IS ENTITLED TO THE SALARY PROVIDED IN THE
15 STATE BUDGET.

16 (C) (1) THE DIRECTOR SHALL:

17 (I) ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON ALL MATTERS ASSIGNED TO THE
18 OFFICE;

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

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

24 (IV) ADOPT REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE
25 PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.

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

30 10-203.

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 (5) WORKING WITH STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES TO ENSURE ACCESS
11 FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS TO SAFETY AND EMERGENCY
12 SERVICES, INCLUDING THE ACQUISITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF VISUAL SMOKE
13 DETECTORS;

14 (6) DEVELOPING A REFERRAL SERVICE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF
15 HEARING INDIVIDUALS;

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

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

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

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

25 (11) PROVIDING A NETWORK THROUGH WHICH SERVICES PROVIDED BY
26 STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS SERVING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
27 INDIVIDUALS CAN BE CHANNELED; AND

28 (12) PROMOTING COMPLIANCE WITH STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL LAWS
29 AND POLICIES PROTECTING AND SERVING DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
30 INDIVIDUALS.

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

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

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

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

3 (D) THE OFFICE SHALL:

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

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

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

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

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