

SENATE BILL 79

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(PRE-FILED)

By: **Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee (By Request – Departmental – Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Office of the)**

Requested: November 4, 2009

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2010

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: January 19, 2010

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

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

3 FOR the purpose of altering the responsibilities of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of
4 Hearing; altering the name and the membership of the Maryland Advisory
5 Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; defining a certain term; and
6 generally relating to the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the
7 Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article – State Government
10 Section 9–2401, 9–2403, and 9–2404
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2009 Replacement Volume)

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

15 **Article – State Government**

16 9–2401.

17 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (b) "Council" means the Maryland Advisory Council [for] ON Deaf and Hard
2 of Hearing Individuals.

3 (c) (1) "Deaf and hard of hearing individuals" means those residents of
4 Maryland who have a partial or complete loss of hearing.

5 (2) "Deaf and hard of hearing individuals" includes **INDIVIDUALS**
6 **WHO ARE** [the] deaf, [the] hard of hearing, **DEAFBLIND**, and [the] late-deafened.

7 **(3) "DEAFBLIND" MEANS THOSE RESIDENTS OF MARYLAND WHO**
8 **HAVE CONCOMITANT VISION AND HEARING LOSS.**

9 (d) "Director" means the Director of the Office.

10 (e) "Office" means the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

11 9-2403.

12 (a) The Office shall be responsible for promoting the general welfare of deaf
13 and hard of hearing individuals in the State.

14 (b) The responsibilities of the Office shall include:

15 (1) providing, advocating, and coordinating the adoption of public
16 policies, regulations, and programs that will benefit deaf and hard of hearing
17 individuals;

18 (2) improving access to communication and to existing services and
19 programs for deaf and hard of hearing individuals;

20 (3) providing direct services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals as
21 appropriate;

22 (4) increasing public awareness of the needs and issues affecting deaf
23 and hard of hearing individuals;

24 (5) working with State and local agencies to ensure access for deaf and
25 hard of hearing individuals to safety and emergency services[, including the
26 acquisition and distribution of visual smoke detectors];

27 (6) developing a referral service for deaf and hard of hearing
28 individuals;

29 (7) serving as an information clearinghouse on the needs and issues
30 affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals;

1 (8) working to increase access for deaf and hard of hearing individuals
2 to educational, health, and social opportunities;

3 (9) working with private organizations, the federal government, and
4 other units of State government to promote economic development for deaf and hard of
5 hearing individuals;

6 (10) working to eliminate the underemployment and unemployment of
7 deaf and hard of hearing individuals;

8 (11) providing a network through which services provided by State and
9 federal programs serving deaf and hard of hearing individuals can be channeled; and

10 (12) promoting compliance with State, local, and federal laws and
11 policies protecting and serving deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

12 (c) The Office shall hold at least two public town hall meetings each year to
13 receive public comments on:

14 (1) the quality of State services and programs affecting deaf and hard
15 of hearing individuals;

16 (2) the functions and operations of the Office; and

17 (3) any other issues that affect deaf and hard of hearing individuals,
18 including those specified in subsection (b) of this section.

19 (d) The Office shall:

20 (1) help facilitate the appropriate delivery of State, local, and other
21 public services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals;

22 (2) advise other units of State government and the General Assembly
23 on the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals;

24 (3) subject to appropriations in the State budget, provide any
25 reasonable resources that any other unit of State government requests to serve or
26 assist deaf and hard of hearing individuals; and

27 (4) to the greatest extent possible, in order to avoid any duplication of
28 effort, coordinate with other units of the State and the federal government the services
29 provided to deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

30 9-2404.

31 (a) There is a Maryland Advisory Council [for] ON the Deaf and Hard of
32 Hearing.

1 (b) (1) The Council consists of [16] 18 members appointed by the
2 Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

3 (2) Of the [16] 18 Council members, at least five of the members shall
4 be deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

5 (c) Of the [16] 18 Council members:

6 (1) one shall be the State Superintendent or a designee from the State
7 Department of Education;

8 (2) one shall be the Secretary or a designee from the Department of
9 Health and Mental Hygiene;

10 (3) one shall be the Secretary or a designee from the Department of
11 Human Resources;

12 (4) one shall be the Secretary or a designee from the Department of
13 Transportation;

14 (5) one shall be from the Human Relations Commission;

15 (6) one shall be the Secretary or a designee from the Department of
16 Labor, Licensing, and Regulation;

17 (7) one shall be the Secretary or a designee from the Department of
18 Housing and Community Development;

19 (8) one shall be the Superintendent or a designee from the Maryland
20 School for the Deaf; [and]

21 **(9) ONE SHALL BE THE SECRETARY OR A DESIGNEE FROM THE**
22 **DEPARTMENT OF AGING; AND**

23 **[(9) (10) [eight] NINE** shall be from the general public.

24 (d) (1) The [eight] NINE members from the general public shall be chosen
25 from different geographical areas of the State.

26 (2) Of the [eight] NINE members from the general public:

27 (i) five shall be deaf and hard of hearing individuals;

28 (ii) one shall be a private citizen with special knowledge or
29 expertise relating to services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals;

1 (iii) one shall be a parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child; [and]

2 (iv) one shall be from a private agency providing services to deaf
3 and hard of hearing individuals; AND

4 (V) ONE SHALL BE A PERSON WITH SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE
5 OR EXPERTISE RELATING TO SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAFBLIND.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
7 October 1, 2010.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.