

# SENATE BILL 677

J1, F1, F2

9lr2073

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By: **Senator West**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2019

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Deaf or Hard of Hearing Individuals – Support for Parents**

3 FOR the purpose of renaming the Hearing Aid Loan Bank Program in the State  
4 Department of Education to be the Hearing Aid and Language and Communication  
5 Video Loan Bank Program; renaming the Hearing Aid Loan Bank in the Department  
6 to be the Hearing Aid and Language and Communication Video Loan Bank; altering  
7 the purpose of the Program; requiring the Loan Bank to lend and provide certain  
8 videos and certain downloadable resources to the parents or legal guardians of  
9 certain individuals; requiring the Governor to include a certain appropriation in the  
10 annual State budget for the Loan Bank for a certain purpose; extending the loan  
11 period for a hearing aid loaned under the Program; extending the amount of time for  
12 which the Program may extend the loan period for a hearing aid loan; exempting the  
13 parent or legal guardian of a deaf or hard of hearing individual from paying tuition  
14 at a public institution of higher education for any course that teaches a language or  
15 communication mode; requiring each hospital to provide a certain list of resources to  
16 the parent or legal guardian of a certain newborn before the discharge of the  
17 newborn; requiring the Department of Disabilities to provide to hospitals in the State  
18 a certain list for a certain purpose; altering certain definitions; defining certain  
19 terms; making conforming changes; and generally relating to support for hearing  
20 parents or legal guardians of deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

21 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

22 Article – Education

23 Section 8–601 through 8–606 to be under the amended subtitle “Subtitle 6. Hearing  
24 Aid and Language and Communication Video Loan Bank Program”

25 Annotated Code of Maryland

26 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

27 BY adding to

28 Article – Education

29 Section 15–106.10

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Annotated Code of Maryland  
2 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

3 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
4 Article – Health – General  
5 Section 19–308.5  
6 Annotated Code of Maryland  
7 (2015 Replacement Volume and 2018 Supplement)

8 BY adding to  
9 Article – Human Services  
10 Section 7–710  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2007 Volume and 2018 Supplement)

13 Preamble

14 WHEREAS, Every parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child identified through  
15 Maryland’s Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program, including through  
16 universal hearing screening or through other means, should receive information and  
17 development support on language or other means of communication without delay; and

18 WHEREAS, Parents play an important role in all areas of their child’s life; and

19 WHEREAS, Language is a fundamental human right, including for hearing parents  
20 of deaf and hard of hearing children; and

21 WHEREAS, Hearing parents of deaf or hard of hearing children should not be  
22 burdened with the cost of learning a language or other means of communication to use with  
23 their child; and

24 WHEREAS, Language deprivation is a public health issue; and

25 WHEREAS, 90% to 95% of deaf or hard of hearing children are born to hearing  
26 parents; and

27 WHEREAS, Data and research demonstrate that language proficiency fosters  
28 emergent literacy, reading, and writing acquisition from birth; and

29 WHEREAS, Data and research demonstrate that hearing loss impedes a child’s  
30 receptive and expressive language acquisition in meaningful ways; and

31 WHEREAS, Data and research demonstrate that a lack of parental communicative  
32 interaction suppresses the developmental attachment between parents and children and  
33 thus suppresses the child’s early childhood development; and

34 WHEREAS, A program for providing support for language or other means of

1 communication for parents of deaf or hard of hearing children to use with their child should  
2 not replace or alter any ongoing Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program or  
3 Early Intervention services, schools, or programs for deaf or hard of hearing children,  
4 including the Infant Services Family Plan and the Individualized Education Program; now,  
5 therefore,

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

8 **Article – Education**

9 Subtitle 6. Hearing Aid **AND LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION VIDEO** Loan Bank  
10 Program.

11 8–601.

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

13 (b) “Eligible [child] **INDIVIDUAL**” means [a child] **AN INDIVIDUAL** who:

14 (1) Is a resident of the State;

15 (2) Is identified by an otolaryngologist or a licensed audiologist as having  
16 a hearing loss; **AND**

17 [(3) Has no immediate access to a hearing aid; and]

18 [(4) (3) (I) Is under the age of [18] **21** years; **AND**

19 (II) **HAS NOT GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL.**

20 (c) “Licensed audiologist” means an individual who is licensed to practice  
21 audiology under Title 2 of the Health Occupations Article.

22 (d) “Loan Bank” means the Hearing Aid **AND LANGUAGE AND**  
23 **COMMUNICATION VIDEO** Loan Bank.

24 (e) “Otolaryngologist” means an individual who:

25 (1) Is licensed to practice medicine under Title 14 of the Health  
26 Occupations Article; and

27 (2) Specializes in otolaryngology.

28 (f) “Program” means the Hearing Aid **AND LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**  
29 **VIDEO** Loan Bank Program.

1 8-602.

2 (a) There is a Hearing Aid **AND LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION VIDEO**  
3 Loan Bank Program in the Department.

4 (b) The Program is established for the purpose of lending [hearing] **OR**  
5 **PROVIDING:**

6 (1) **HEARING** aids on a temporary basis to a parent or legal guardian of an  
7 eligible [child] **INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS NO IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO A HEARING AID** to  
8 ensure that [children under the age of 18 years] **ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS** will have  
9 maximum auditory input throughout childhood [and], adolescence, **AND INTO YOUNG**  
10 **ADULTHOOD; AND**

11 (2) **LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION VIDEOS ON A TEMPORARY**  
12 **BASIS AND RESOURCES THAT MAY BE DOWNLOADED FROM A WEBSITE TO A PARENT**  
13 **OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF AN ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL TO ENSURE THAT PARENTS OR**  
14 **LEGAL GUARDIANS OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS HAVE:**

15 (i) **ACCESS TO RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE THEM WITH**  
16 **UNBIASED INFORMATION ABOUT LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION OPTIONS TO USE**  
17 **WITH THEIR DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD; AND**

18 (ii) **RESOURCES TO TEACH THEM THE LANGUAGE OR OTHER**  
19 **MEANS OF COMMUNICATION THAT THEY CHOOSE TO USE WITH THEIR DEAF OR HARD**  
20 **OF HEARING CHILD.**

21 (c) The Program shall employ an otolaryngologist or a licensed audiologist.

22 8-603.

23 (a) There is a permanent Hearing Aid **AND LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**  
24 **VIDEO** Loan Bank in the Department.

25 (b) The Program shall provide and maintain:

26 (1) A pool of hearing aids in the Loan Bank to lend to a parent or legal  
27 guardian of an eligible [child] **INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS NO IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO A**  
28 **HEARING AID;**

29 (2) Testing and programming equipment for hearing aids in the Loan  
30 Bank; [and]

31 (3) Supplies for repair and reconditioning of hearing aids in the Loan Bank;

1 AND

2 (4) LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION VIDEOS TO BE LOANED TO A  
3 PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF AN ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL AND RESOURCES THAT  
4 MAY BE DOWNLOADED FROM A WEBSITE THAT PROVIDE:

5 (I) UNBIASED INFORMATION ABOUT LANGUAGE AND  
6 COMMUNICATION OPTIONS TO USE WITH A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD; AND

7 (II) INSTRUCTION ON LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OR  
8 COMMUNICATION OPTIONS IN SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH.

9 (C) (1) THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE STATE BUDGET AN  
10 APPROPRIATION TO THE PROGRAM OF:

11 (I) \$5,000 IN FISCAL YEAR 2021; AND

12 (II) \$300 IN FISCAL YEAR 2022 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR  
13 THEREAFTER.

14 (2) THE APPROPRIATION IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION  
15 SHALL BE USED TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMENT IN SUBSECTION (B)(4) OF THIS  
16 SECTION.

17 8-604.

18 (a) The Program shall lend a suitable hearing aid to a parent or legal guardian of  
19 an eligible [child] INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS NO IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO A HEARING AID on  
20 receipt of:

21 (1) A prescription from an otolaryngologist or a licensed audiologist; and

22 (2) Any documents required by the Program to prove that the [child]  
23 INDIVIDUAL is an eligible [child] INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS NO IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO A  
24 HEARING AID.

25 (b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the loan period  
26 shall be for not more than [6 months] 1 YEAR.

27 (2) The Program may extend the original loan period FOR THE LOAN OF  
28 A HEARING AID for AN additional [3-month periods] 1-YEAR PERIOD if, prior to each  
29 extension, the Program determines that:

30 (i) The [child] INDIVIDUAL does not have immediate access to

1 another hearing aid under Medicaid, the Maryland Children's Health Program, or private  
2 health insurance;

3 (ii) The [child's] **INDIVIDUAL'S** parent or legal guardian currently  
4 does not have the financial means to obtain immediate access to another hearing aid; and

5 (iii) The [child's] **INDIVIDUAL'S** parent or legal guardian is making  
6 reasonable efforts to obtain access to another hearing aid.

7 (c) A parent or legal guardian who borrows a hearing aid **FROM THE LOAN**  
8 **BANK** for an eligible [child] **INDIVIDUAL** shall:

9 (1) Be the custodian of the hearing aid;

10 (2) Return the hearing aid immediately to the Loan Bank on the expiration  
11 of the loan period or receipt of a suitable permanent hearing aid, whichever occurs first;

12 (3) Be responsible for the proper care and use of the hearing aid;

13 (4) Be responsible for any damage to or loss of the hearing aid; and

14 (5) Sign a written agreement provided by the State Superintendent that  
15 states the term and conditions of the loan.

16 (d) **[The] IF THE PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF AN ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL**  
17 **RECEIVES A HEARING AID ON LOAN FROM THE LOAN BANK, THE** Program shall ensure  
18 that the eligible [child's] **INDIVIDUAL'S** otolaryngologist or licensed audiologist instructs  
19 the parent or legal guardian about the proper care and use of a hearing aid provided under  
20 the Program.

21 8-605.

22 The State Board shall adopt regulations to implement the provisions of this subtitle,  
23 including regulations that:

24 (1) For the purpose of implementing § 8-604(a) of this subtitle, identify the  
25 types of documents that the Program may require a parent or legal guardian to submit to  
26 prove that [a child] **AN INDIVIDUAL** is an eligible [child] **INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS NO**  
27 **IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO A HEARING AID**; and

28 (2) For the purpose of implementing § 8-604(b)(2) of this subtitle, establish  
29 factors that the Program shall consider when evaluating whether a parent or legal  
30 guardian:

31 (i) Has the financial means to obtain immediate access to another  
32 hearing aid; or

1 (ii) Is making reasonable efforts to obtain immediate access to  
2 another hearing aid.

3 8-606.

4 (a) Beginning in 2011, no later than December 31 each year, the State  
5 Superintendent shall submit a report to the Governor and, subject to § 2-1246 of the State  
6 Government Article, the General Assembly regarding the implementation of this subtitle.

7 (b) The annual report shall include the following information:

8 (1) The number and ages of [children] **INDIVIDUALS** who received hearing  
9 aids through the Program that year;

10 (2) The number of [children] **INDIVIDUALS** who received hearing aids  
11 through the Program that year and subsequently received hearing aids through Medicaid,  
12 the Maryland Children's Health Program, or private insurance;

13 (3) The length of each original loan **OF A HEARING AID**;

14 (4) The number of times that each original loan **OF A HEARING AID** was  
15 extended and the length of each extension;

16 (5) The number of times that hearing aids were not properly returned to  
17 the Loan Bank; and

18 (6) Any other information that the State Superintendent believes is  
19 relevant to evaluating the costs and benefits of the Program.

20 **15-106.10.**

21 (A) (1) **IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**  
22 **INDICATED.**

23 (2) **"LANGUAGE OR COMMUNICATION MODE" MEANS THE METHOD**  
24 **THAT A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN CHOOSES TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR**  
25 **DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD, INCLUDING:**

26 (I) **AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE, AS DEFINED IN § 7-702 OF THE**  
27 **HUMAN SERVICES ARTICLE;**

28 (II) **CUED SPEECH, WHICH IS A SYSTEM OF HANDSHAPES AND**  
29 **POSITIONS THAT, WHEN COMBINED WITH THE MOUTH MOVEMENTS OF SPEECH,**  
30 **VISUALLY REPRESENT THE PHONEMES OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE; AND**

1 (III) LISTENING AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE, IN WHICH INFANTS  
 2 AND YOUNG CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS ARE TAUGHT TO LISTEN AND TALK WITH  
 3 SUPPORT FROM HEARING TECHNOLOGY, SUCH AS HEARING AIDS, ASSISTIVE  
 4 LISTENING DEVICES, OR COCHLEAR IMPLANTS.

5 (3) "DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD" MEANS A MINOR WHO HAS  
 6 HEARING LOSS AS DETERMINED THROUGH A UNIVERSAL NEWBORN HEARING  
 7 SCREENING UNDER § 19-308.5 OF THE HEALTH - GENERAL ARTICLE OR A SIMILAR  
 8 SCREENING.

9 (4) "TUITION" MEANS THE CHARGES IMPOSED BY A PUBLIC  
 10 INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ENROLLMENT IN A COURSE THAT  
 11 TEACHES A LANGUAGE OR COMMUNICATION MODE AT THE INSTITUTION,  
 12 INCLUDING CHARGES FOR REGISTRATION AND ALL FEES FOR ENROLLING IN THE  
 13 COURSE.

14 (B) A PARENT OF A DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING CHILD IS EXEMPT FROM  
 15 PAYING TUITION AT A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ANY  
 16 COURSE THAT TEACHES A LANGUAGE OR COMMUNICATION MODE.

17 Article - Health - General

18 19-308.5.

19 (a) Each hospital that provides obstetrical services shall establish a universal  
 20 newborn hearing screening program to ensure that:

21 (1) (I) All newborns born in the hospital are screened for hearing loss  
 22 before discharge; and

23 [(2)] (II) The results are reported as required under § 13-605 of this  
 24 article; AND

25 (2) BEFORE DISCHARGE, THE HOSPITAL PROVIDES TO THE PARENT  
 26 OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A NEWBORN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A HEARING LOSS  
 27 UNDER ITEM (1)(I) OF THIS SUBSECTION A LIST OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR  
 28 PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH HEARING LOSS, INCLUDING:

29 (I) LOCATIONS FOR SUBSEQUENT TESTING; AND

30 (II) UNBIASED RESOURCES ON LANGUAGE AND  
 31 COMMUNICATION MODE OPTIONS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THEIR CHILD.



1 (b) The universal newborn hearing screening program established under this  
2 section shall consist of at least one of the following screening tests:

3 (1) Auditory brain stem response;

4 (2) Otoacoustic emissions; or

5 (3) Another appropriate screening test recommended by the Advisory  
6 Council and approved by the Secretary.

7 **Article – Human Services**

8 **7–710.**

9 **THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REGULARLY, BUT NOT LESS THAN ONE TIME EACH**  
10 **YEAR, PROVIDE TO EACH HOSPITAL IN THE STATE FOR USE BY THE HOSPITAL’S**  
11 **UNIVERSAL NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING PROGRAM, A LIST OF:**

12 **(1) LOCATIONS WHERE A NEWBORN IDENTIFIED THROUGH A**  
13 **NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING AS HAVING HEARING LOSS MAY RECEIVE**  
14 **ADDITIONAL TESTING; AND**

15 **(2) UNBIASED RESOURCES ON LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**  
16 **MODE OPTIONS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THEIR CHILD.**

17 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
18 October 1, 2019.