

HOUSE BILL 1363

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5lr3101

By: **Delegate Bhandari**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2025

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Places of Public Accommodation – Captioning for Motion Picture Houses –**
3 **Alterations**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the number of screens in a motion picture house above which
5 the motion picture house is required to provide open movie captioning; requiring that
6 each motion picture house that is a place of public accommodation report to the
7 Commission on Civil Rights and the Attorney General on the number of screenings
8 each month in which certain captions were used; and generally relating to movie
9 captioning in motion picture houses.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11 Article – State Government
12 Section 20–306
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

17 **Article – State Government**

18 20–306.

19 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

20 (2) “Closed captioning” means a transcript or dialog of the audio portion of
21 a television program that is displayed on a television receiver screen when the user
22 activates the feature.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (3) “Closed movie captioning” means the written display of the dialog and
2 certain nonspeech information of a motion picture that is generally delivered to individual
3 patrons on a captioning device in a motion picture house.

4 (4) “Closed-captioning television receiver” means a receiver of television
5 programming that has the ability to display closed captioning, including a television, digital
6 set top box, and any other technology capable of displaying closed captioning.

7 (5) “Open movie captioning” means a transcript or dialog of the audio
8 portion of a motion picture that is displayed on a motion picture screen that cannot be
9 turned off by a viewer.

10 (6) “Public area” means a part of a place of public accommodation that is
11 open to the general public.

12 (7) “Regular hours” means the hours of any day in which a place of public
13 accommodation is open to members of the general public.

14 (b) (1) On request, a place of public accommodation may not fail to keep closed
15 captioning activated on any closed-captioning television receiver that is in use during
16 regular hours in any public area.

17 (2) This subsection does not require a place of public accommodation to
18 make closed captioning available in a public area of the place of public accommodation if:

19 (i) no television receiver of any kind is available in the public area;
20 or

21 (ii) the only public television receiver available in the public area is
22 not a closed-captioning television receiver.

23 (c) (1) A place of public accommodation that is a motion picture house shall
24 provide access to fully operational and well-maintained closed movie captioning technology
25 for the general public for each screening of a motion picture that is produced and available
26 with closed movie captioning as required by Title III of the federal Americans with
27 Disabilities Act.

28 (2) (i) This paragraph does not apply to motion pictures screened fewer
29 than five times from Friday through Thursday in a 7-day period in the motion picture
30 house.

31 (ii) This paragraph applies only to the first 3 weeks after a motion
32 picture premieres in the motion picture house.

33 (iii) If a motion picture is produced and available to motion picture
34 houses with open movie captioning, a place of public accommodation that controls, operates,
35 owns, or leases a motion picture house with [eight] **FOUR** or more screens in the State shall

1 provide open movie captioning for at least two screenings for each motion picture it screens
2 each week.

3 (iv) Beginning 3 weeks after a motion picture premieres, a place of
4 accommodation that controls, operates, owns, or leases a motion picture house with [eight]
5 **FOUR** or more screens in the State may provide open movie captioning with reasonable
6 notice.

7 **(D) ON OR BEFORE THE 10TH DAY OF THE MONTH, EACH MONTH, A MOTION**
8 **PICTURE HOUSE THAT IS A PLACE OF PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION SHALL REPORT TO**
9 **THE COMMISSION AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON:**

10 **(1) THE MOTION PICTURES SCREENED DURING THE PRECEDING**
11 **MONTH THAT USED CLOSED MOVIE CAPTIONING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS**
12 **SECTION;**

13 **(2) IF APPLICABLE, THE MOTION PICTURES SCREENED DURING THE**
14 **PRECEDING MONTH THAT USED OPEN MOVIE CAPTIONING IN ACCORDANCE WITH**
15 **THIS SECTION; AND**

16 **(3) THE TIMES AND DATES THAT MOTION PICTURES DESCRIBED**
17 **UNDER ITEMS (1) AND (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION WERE SCREENED.**

18 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
19 October 1, 2025.