

HOUSE BILL 435

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CF SB 259

By: **Delegate Bhandari**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

Committee Report: Favorable

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 2, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Places of Public Accommodation – Open Movie Captioning**

3 FOR the purpose of decreasing the number of screens in a motion picture house above which
4 the motion picture house is required to provide open movie captioning; and generally
5 relating to movie captioning in motion picture houses.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
7 Article – State Government
8 Section 20–306
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

13 **Article – State Government**

14 20–306.

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

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

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 (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 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
8 October 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.