

SENATE BILL 259

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By: **Senator Jackson**

Introduced and read first time: January 19, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

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.

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(iii) If a motion picture is produced and available to motion picture houses with open movie captioning, a place of public accommodation that controls, operates, owns, or leases a motion picture house with [eight] **FOUR** or more screens in the State shall provide open movie captioning for at least two screenings for each motion picture it screens each week.

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

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