



**NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND**
MARYLAND

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Subject: Support for SB 667 with an amendment

To: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

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The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland support the concept of reducing the cost of textbooks used in higher education. We also appreciate that the bill requires textbooks and other digital materials to be accessible to students and faculty. However, the bill has a very large flaw and must be amended.

Amendment: Page 2, Line 8, after “(2) Shall, “ strike “to the extent practicable”.

This language should be removed because it is much too subjective. Nothing will be made accessible if this clause remains in the bill.

This language is not necessary because newer technologies and publishing standards have made it easy to create accessible digital textbooks. Publishers of all types have moved away from the PDF format for books, to the EPUB3 format, a free international digital book technical standard in which it is easy to make books accessible. Large textbook publishers such as Elsevier and Wiley, have led the way in abandoning PDF for the new accessible EPUB3 format and most others have followed.

Please amend SB 667 and make accessibility a reality.