

March 6, 2022

Economic Matters Committee  
State Capitol  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Economic Matters Committee:

My name is Meredith DeSomma and I am Deaf. I live in Carroll County.

Behalf on I am writing to ask you to support HB 1238- Open Captioning Bill, sponsored by Delegate Harry Bhandari. This bill will require all motion picture houses to offer closed captions for each screening of a motion picture. It also will require that motion picture houses provide open captioning for at least certain screenings each week.

Captioning, also known as same-language subtitles, benefits everyone who watches videos (children, adolescents, college students, and adults). More than 100 empirical studies document that captioning a video improves comprehension of, attention to, and memory for the video. Captions are particularly beneficial for persons watching videos in their non-native language, for children and adults learning to read, and for persons who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.

Most importantly, the bill provides communities with the assurance and peace of mind that they have access to the movie without using devices or other methods the same as other people who go to the movie.

My story is I have not been to a movie theatre since the early 1990's due to not having any equal access like everyone else who doesn't need any of those ridiculous devices. I would love to go back with equal access. Now that I have 2 young Deaf/HoH children, I want to make sure they have the equal opportunity by attending a movie theater with open captioning while they still receive benefits by learning to read and have family quality time watching the movie like everyone else.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter and I appreciate your support on HB 1238.

Sincerely,  
Meredith DeSomma  
mdutchy81@gmail.com