



Friday 11 March 2023

Maryland Senate
Judicial Proceedings Committee

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) is writing to request your favorable support for HB 1238 – Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses - Captioning.

TDI is the nation's leading advocate for deaf and hard of hearing people's equitable access to the phone, TV, cable, wireless, and broadband networks.

We commend the Maryland Association of the Deaf's (MDAD) strong advocacy for this bill, we believe that this bill will help not only the deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders, but the general population as well. Studies have shown the hearing loss population is growing 4% faster than the general U.S. population.

It is undisputed that movies have influenced society's advancements in politics, economics, and social experiences. Unfortunately, far too often when a deaf or hard of hearing movie attendee requests for captioning devices, the devices they receive are typically broken, non-functional, or uncomfortable to use. As a result, the DHH movie goer has no choice but to either watch the movie without captions or ask for a refund and have their plans ruined. This is not an equitable experience. Any Marylander, regardless of their disability, should be able to conveniently watch their preferred movie of their choosing at any cinema house.

Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders deserve to enjoy the movies with captions and share the same experience as every other person watching the same movie.

TDI encourages the committee to support HB 1238. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Kaika
Chief Executive Officer
TDI