

April 5, 2022

Judicial Proceedings Committee
State Capitol
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Judy Jonas and I am Hard of Hearing. I live in Montgomery County.

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 same as other people who go to the movie.

My story is that I've been an ASL/English interpreter for many years and recently my hearing has diminished so I now wear hearing aids and frequently turn the captions on, on my television. Open captions are the only acceptable way for people with hearing losses to have accurate and in synch with the movie accessibility. It's not rocket science to provide open captions. Movies are required to have them. Just do it. English language learners and children benefit from the captions so they reach a wider audience than the movie theaters envision. Those of us with hearing losses must have equal access to films. You'll be surprised how many will attend these showings. The county is aging — the baby boomers have hearing losses from all the loud music they heard over their lifetimes. They will show up. Just do it!!!

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

Sincerely,

Judy Jonas
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