

April 5, 2022

Judicial Proceedings Committee
State Capitol
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Sagar Kothari and I am Deaf. 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 personal story is I've used Rear Window Captioning (RWC) device with cup holder several times. I had to sit still without changing my sitting positions. When I changed my sitting position, I had to adjust the RWC arm to fit my view and it made noise. Quite annoying. Other device I have tried was Sony subtitle glasses and they were heavy and it sore my ears and nose. Whenever I changed my sitting position, I had to adjust my lens so that I can view the actors and the captioning in the right place. It's not comfortable at all. With Opened Captioning (OC) I would be able to read the white texts (same as subtitles) at the bottom of the movie screen with ease just like staying home and watch tv with closed-captioning. Lessons learned, I refused to go to movie theater if they only provided either RWC or Sony glasses. If they provide OC, then I will definitely go and enjoy the movie with ease and enjoy the same experience as hearing moviegoers. If you were in my shoes and try out all of those three devices mentioned, you will understand my feelings and choose to go with OC. Please support HB 1238 bill. Thank you.

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

Sincerely,

Sagar Kothari
oceantetra@gmail.com