

Chair Wilson and Vice Chair Crosby, thank you for letting me testify. My name is Roy Fernandes. I am a native of India. I came to the US in 1980 and found out that there were no open caption screenings at most theaters in the US, especially Maryland. Presently Sony CC glasses, Captiview device and rear-window captioning system are not helpful for foreign-speaking movie viewers. In India, there are many open captioned screenings at the theater. Screenings started being open captioned a long time ago. In that country, they don't use Sony CC glasses or Captiview device like that. Open captioning screenings indeed help educate Indian-speaking viewers to learn English and Hindi since state residents speak their own language. Common language that is widely spoken in India is English. Here's what open-captioned movies look like (see images). Majority of Indians supported open captioning screenings. Even there is an Indian-owned movie theater in Falls Church, VA providing English subtitled Indian movies and a regal movie theater in Virginia providing English subtitled Indian screenings, not general movie screenings. Common language in the US is English so captioning would be a good opportunity for foreign-speaking viewers to learn English. Other countries already have set up the OC/subtitled movies. We are in the US and we are behind. I think it is time to change.

Second, the proven data shows that captions indeed benefit everyone. This captioning technique can improve children's reading skills, boost adolescents' written and spoken vocabulary, increase college students' attention to lectures and enhance second-language learner's pronunciation. Captions are like foreign-language subtitles: they translate a spoken language into a written language. Captions also translate sound effects ("raindrops falling," "footsteps approaching," "horses galloping"). Captions transcribe song lyrics and offer other helpful clues, such as identifying conversational partners by their name and indicating off-screen voices with italics.

As you can see, the empirical evidence is clear: Captions, also known as same-language subtitles, benefit everyone who watches open captioning movies. The common language in the US is English so captioning would be a good opportunity for foreign-speaking viewers to learn English. Other countries already have set up the OC/subtitled movies. We are in the US and we are behind. I think it is time to change.

Please support this bill HB 264 to provide equal access and others to learn written/spoken/signed English. I appreciate your taking your time to listen to my testimony. Thanks again.