



**Maryland Association of the Deaf
Written Testimony**

**HB 1176 - Voluntary 9-1-1 Registry for Individuals Needing Special Assistance
Wednesday March 8, 2023
Position: Favorable with Amendments**

The Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) is a statewide organization that protects the interests of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders concerning accessibility and equity issues. The purpose of the Association shall be to preserve, protect, and promote the civil, human, and linguistic rights of Deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals in the state of Maryland.

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Communities want to be able to trust their local public safety departments to engage with them in a professional and ethical manner, particularly in times of crisis. However, there has historically been a fraught relationship between communities and their local public safety departments due to behavior and practices of unfair treatment and civil rights violations. This is true for the disability community. There are approximately 1.2 million Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people in the State of Maryland.

Board Members

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HB 1176 aims to create safer interactions between individuals with disabilities and public safety by creating a 9-1-1 registry where families and guardians of an individual with a disability can self-identify an individual’s disability, trusting the responding public safety personnel to use the information to better interact with an individual. HB 1176 is modeled on a successful program in Howard County that was established with close collaboration between families that have a member with a disability and the Howard County Police Department.

HB 1176, rather than mandating local jurisdictions create such programs, should simply authorize the creation of these programs.

Maryland Association of the Deaf supports HB 1176, with amendments.

- Page 2, Line 4-5, (C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO AUTHORIZE INDIVIDUAL ADULTS, PARENTS OR GUARDIANS OF MINOR CHILDREN, OR GUARDIANS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TO REGISTER WITH A LOCAL JURISDICTION OR LOCAL 9-1-1 CALL CENTER IN ORDER TO ALERT FIRST RESPONDERS ENCOUNTERING A REGISTERED INDIVIDUAL THAT THE INDIVIDUAL:
- Page 2, Line 20, (I) BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED;
- Page 2, Line 21, (II) DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING;

- At pg. 2, line 2: ~~THERE IS A~~ LOCAL JURISDICTIONS OR LOCAL 9-1-1 CALL CENTERS ARE AUTHORIZED TO ESTABLISH A 9-1-1 REGISTRY PROGRAM
- At pg. 3, line 5: EACH LOCAL JURISDICTION OR LOCAL 9-1-1 CALL CENTER SHALL ~~SHALL~~ MAY
- Pg. 4, line 28 (ADD): EACH LOCAL JURISDICTION OR LOCAL 9-1-1 CALL CENTER THAT HAS ELECTED TO CREATE A REGISTRY ...
- Page 4 (F) line 20: Page 4, Line 20, "I certify that I am the INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT OF THE REGISTRY, parent or legal guardian of the minor child or guardian of the individual with special needs.

To provide for notification and removal of the 9-1-1 registry:

- On Page 4, Line 32, New Line (G)(2) EACH LOCAL JURISDICTION OR LOCAL 9-1-1 CALL CENTER SHALL CONTACT THE INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT TO THE REGISTRY ONCE THEY HAVE REACHED 18 YEARS OF AGE TO NOTIFY THE INDIVIDUAL THAT THEY ARE ON THE REGISTRY AND MAY BE REMOVED UPON REQUEST.
- (G)(3) AN INDIVIDUAL AGED 18 YEARS AND OLDER WHO IS UNDER GUARDIANSHIP AND IS PLACED ON THE REGISTRY SHALL RECEIVE NOTICE OF THIS FACT, ALONG WITH A COPY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO 9-1-1 BY THE REGISTRANT.
- (G)(4) AN INDIVIDUAL AGED 18 YEARS AND OLDER WHO IS UNDER GUARDIANSHIP MAY REMOVE THEMSELVES FROM THE REGISTRY UPON REQUEST.
- (G)(5) IN THE NOTICES DESCRIBED IN (G)(2) AND (G)(3), EACH LOCAL JURISDICTION OR LOCAL 9-1-1 CALL CENTER SHALL PROVIDE THE PHONE NUMBER TO CALL OR EMAIL ADDRESS TO REQUEST REMOVAL FROM THE REGISTRY.

A voluntary 9-1-1 registry list has the potential to aid loved ones of individuals with disabilities. as such, it is imperative there are parameters set in place to foster greater autonomy within the disability community when implementing this program. The suggested amendments above will strengthen HB 1176 to provide for greater autonomy and transparency for loved ones of those with disabilities, Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing and individuals with disabilities, and Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing themselves.

For those reasons, we support HB 1176 with amendments.

MDAD Board of Directors