



**Maryland Association of the Deaf
Written Testimony**

SB 528 - Drunk Driving Offenses - Ignition Interlock System Program

Wednesday March 8, 2023

Position: Favorable with Amendments

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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, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals in the State of Maryland. There are approximately 1.2 millions of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing people in the State.

The Ignition Interlock System Program provided by the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) is not accessible for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. The devices provide two signals: 1) beeping sound and 2) the light bulb. With the beeping sound, how are we supposed to know when to do the breathing test if we cannot hear the beep? Regarding the light bulb, it can be blindsided if it is not in the line of sight. Also, the light bulb is too tiny to be seen especially in the sunray or sunlight. As a result of not hearing the sound and seeing the light as it is blindsided, Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals are often penalized and get their license taken away or suspended because they did not take the breathing test at that time.

Several programs with MVA under the Behavior Health Administration often have programs for people who are required to attend due to their drunk driving records. Deaf and Hard of Hearing people require to have an interpreter so they can understand what is said/discussed. Oftentimes, they do not provide interpreters or captioning service, the information is not accessible and withheld from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. We do not have to note but that violates the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) law by not providing interpreters or captioning for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the State of Maryland. As you may know, ADA states that the vendor/place of service is responsible to provide these accommodations. MDAD has heard stories where Deaf and Hard of Hearing people were told to bring their own and that is not acceptable. It is important to the Maryland Association of the Deaf that the State is in compliance with ADA by providing accommodations for our community.

MDAD also understands that Senator West is introducing an amendment to meet our needs. The organization supports that amendment as well.

For those reasons, we support SB 528 with amendments.

MDAD Board of Directors

