

---

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT Mayor



OFFICE OF EQUITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

DANA P. MOORE, Chief Equity Officer and Director

7 E. Redwood Street, 9th Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

---

**SB 92**

February 6, 2024

**TO:** Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Baltimore City Mayor's Commission on Disabilities

**RE: Senate Bill 92 – Places of Public Accommodation – Motion Pictures Houses – Captioning**

**POSITION: Support**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Mayor's Commission on Disabilities **supports Senate Bill 92 – Places of Public Accommodation – Motion Pictures Houses – Captioning.**

This bill would allow persons with hearing deficits the right to fully enjoy watching a movie on the big screen at their local motion picture house just as everyone else now takes for granted. It would accomplish this by requiring that any place of public accommodation controlling at least two motion picture houses in the State provide what is known as open captioning for at least two screenings of each movie that is shown in a given week.

At present, under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), movie picture houses are required to provide closed captioning access for persons with hearing deficits, which means small individual devices so that each person can read the dialogue as the movie plays on the big screen. But, as you can imagine, this is an awkward way to experience a film that was intended to be enjoyed on the big screen as one seamless experience. The proposed requirement for open captioning for two screenings per week would mean that the dialogue would be displayed on the big screen. While there is some resistance to this for fear of an adverse financial impact, our investigation suggests that such screenings, particularly if offered at the more attractive times, would actually increase the overall audience, because it would also be of interest to seniors as well as persons for whom English is a second language and so having the dialogue on the big screen would enhance the movie-going experience.

We therefore respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 92.