

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

DELEGATE RYAN SPIEGEL

Bill: HB0678

Thursday, February 25, 2025

Dear Delegate Spiegel and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Maggie Marmalyukov, and I am an ASL educator in Maryland and a hearing advocate for the Deaf community. I am writing in strong support of HB0678 and the continued funding of the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL).

As an ASL teacher, I am constantly seeking out resources that provide my students with authentic opportunities to learn about and engage with the Deaf community. Unfortunately, such resources are limited. The DCDL fills a critical gap by offering invaluable access to educational materials, cultural programs, and community outreach efforts that connect hearing individuals with Deaf culture in meaningful ways.

Personally, I have relied on the DCDL to share events with my students, encouraging them to immerse themselves beyond the classroom. I have also attended these events and plan to participate in an ongoing ASL Reading Club, which will allow me to combine my love of ASL and literature in a way that wouldn't be possible without this organization. The DCDL is not just a library; it is a bridge that fosters connection, understanding, and inclusion between the Deaf and hearing communities.

Without sustained and increased funding, the DCDL's ability to provide these crucial services will be at risk. The loss of this program would mean fewer opportunities for ASL learners, less access to cultural education, and a weakened support system for those seeking to engage with the Deaf community. I urge you to recognize the immense value of the DCDL and ensure that it receives the necessary funding to continue and expand its vital work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maggie Marmalyukov