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Appropriations Committee
Subcommittees

Oversight Committee on Pensions
Transportation and the Environment

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library -
Funding and Budget Submission (HB678) - 2025**

Testimony of Delegate Ryan Spiegel - Favorable

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL) serves Deaf and hard-of-hearing Marylanders across the state and has a mission that “[a]ll customers shall have equitable access to Deaf culture information through the Deaf Culture Digital Library in a centralized medium in the state of Maryland.” The DCDL is dedicated to providing leadership and guidance in:

- offering resources about Deaf culture;
- acquiring and preserving an excellent collection of Deaf resources in digital formats;
- furnishing access to information regardless of location;
- providing highly competent assistance to Maryland residents and library staff in local public library systems, academic librarians in colleges and universities, and other libraries throughout Maryland.

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) is required by law to fund the DCDL from MSLA’s Operating Budget, but no additional funding has been provided to meet rising operational costs, which now exceed their current funding. With over 1.2 million Maryland residents identifying as Deaf or hard of hearing, projections show DCDL’s operating costs will continue to rise in the coming years.

The Governor's Office and Department of Budget and Management recognized the need for additional funding and supported MSLA’s deficiency request for FY26, but the DCDL is still in need of a long-term funding solution. House Bill 678 will require the DCDL to submit its annual operating budget to MSLA on or before June 1 each year and will appropriate \$450,000 annually to the DCDL. Its Senate cross-file, SB 358 sponsored by Sen. Nancy King, has already unanimously passed the Senate.

Without this funding, there will be a direct, negative impact on Maryland's Deaf and hard-of-hearing community, and so I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 678. Thank you.