



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Kevin M. Harris in Support of Senate Bill 528 Consumer Protection – Video Streaming Services – Loudness of Commercial Advertisements

Chair Valderrama, Vice-Chair Charkoudian, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

Senate Bill 528, Consumer Protection – Video Streaming Services – Loudness of Commercial Advertisements aims to protect Maryland consumers from excessively loud commercial advertisements on streaming platforms and ensure consistent audio standards across modern media services.

As more Maryland households transition from traditional cable television to ad-supported streaming services, consumers are increasingly subjected to abrupt and disruptive increases in volume when commercial advertisements begin. While federal law protects viewers of broadcast, cable, and satellite television from excessively loud advertisements, those same protections do not currently extend to streaming platforms. This regulatory gap leaves Maryland consumers without consistent safeguards.

In 2010, Congress enacted the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation Act (CALM Act), requiring traditional television providers to ensure that commercials do not exceed the average volume of the programming they accompany. The Federal Communications Commission enforces these standards. Despite this framework, consumer complaints regarding loud advertisements continue to be filed each year, and streaming services remain outside the scope of the Act.

Recognizing this gap, California enacted California Senate Bill 576 in 2025, requiring streaming platforms to comply with the same audio standards that apply to traditional television. The measure received unanimous legislative support, demonstrating bipartisan agreement that consumer protections should remain consistent regardless of how content is delivered.

Senate Bill 528 would extend comparable protections to Maryland residents by requiring streaming platforms operating in the State to ensure that commercial advertisements maintain audio levels consistent with the programming they accompany. By aligning streaming standards with those already applied to broadcast television, this bill modernizes Maryland's consumer protection framework and closes a growing regulatory gap.

SB 528 is a reasonable and commonsense measure to ensure that Maryland residents can enjoy streaming content without being subjected to disruptive or excessively loud advertisements. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 528.