

SB528SponsorTestimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin M. Harris

Position: FAV

KEVIN M. HARRIS
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's
Counties

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 302
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3700
800-492-7122 Ext. 3700
Kevin.Harris@senate.maryland.gov

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 17, 2026

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

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support of **Senate Bill 528, Consumer Protection – Video Streaming Services – Loudness of Commercial Advertisements**, which 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.

Favorable SB0528 Commercial Volume.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronza Othman

Position: FAV



Live the life you want.

From: Ronza Othman, President
National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
15 Charles Plaza, #3002
Baltimore, MD 21201 president@nfbmd.org

To: Senate Finance Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Senate Finance Committee to give a favorable report to SB0528. This bill would prohibit streaming services from having the volume of ads and commercials be louder than the streamed programming content.

Blind and low vision consumers use streaming services like other segments of society. However, blind and low vision consumers access these streaming services using assistive technology such as text to speech software that verbalizes text on the screen in an auditory way so the blind and low vision consumer can have access to the same information nonvisually. However, when streaming services raise the volume on their ads, this interferes with the consumer's ability to hear the assistive technology reading the screen, which hinders our ability to navigate with the page. For example, the ads are so loud that blind and low vision consumers are not able to hear our assistive technology so we are held hostage until the ads end, whereas others not using assistive technology can choose to skip some ads. We cannot hear our technology over the commercial to navigate the "skip ad" button. We also can't interact with the ad itself should we wish to buy what is being marketed to us either.

Moreover, our deaf blind members report having to spend time adjusting their hearing aids and other devices each time the noise level changes, meaning they waste their time having to adjust their devices once the program begins; this hinders their ability to enjoy the program and interferes with what they paid to access.

For those reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB0528. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.

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Uploaded by: margaret durkin

Position: UNF

February 17, 2026

The Honorable Pam Beidle
Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Maryland Senate
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 528 (Harris) - Consumer Protection - Video Streaming Services - Loudness of Commercial Advertisements – Unfavorable

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of TechNet, I'm writing to share comments on SB 528, loudness of commercial advertisements.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes 103 dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents five million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, transportation, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

New technologies bring new products and services to the market. Occasionally, these new products and services generate significant policymaker interest because of transformative features with little precedent and high consumer interface. While some lawmaking may be needed or helpful, TechNet is vigilant against vague and unnecessary laws and regulations that stifle innovation.

Applying broadcast-style regulations to video streaming platforms will lead to compliance issues for these entities. Moreover, unlike traditional television broadcasts, video streaming platform ads are sometimes inserted in real time from varying third party sources.

This legislation would also create a private right of action (PRA). We believe that PRAs lead to frivolous lawsuits and only benefit a subset of industry operating in the litigation space. With the ads being inserted from varying third party sources, it creates ambiguity in liability for PRAs, and consumers could sue streamers when it was actually a third party in control of ad volume. Furthermore, any enforcement

should rest solely with the Attorney General and TechNet is also requesting a cure period to fix any alleged complaints. We suggest removing the current enforcement language and inserting the following:

- Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as providing the basis for, or be subject to, a private right of action for violations of this chapter or under any other law.

For the reasons stated above, TechNet is opposed to SB 528. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Margaret Durkin

Margaret Durkin
TechNet Executive Director, Pennsylvania & the Mid-Atlantic