



Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
State Capitol
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 8, 2026

Dear Delegate,

On behalf of the Metro South Asian Deaf Association, a nonprofit dedicated to advancing accessibility, inclusion, and equal participation for people with disabilities, I am writing to urge your support for HB 435, legislation that would require open-captioned movie screenings in Maryland theaters.

Open captions—subtitles displayed on the screen for everyone—are a simple, proven accommodation that significantly improves access for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, people with auditory processing disorders, seniors with age-related hearing loss, and many families with children. They also benefit individuals for whom English is a second language, as well as patrons who simply prefer captions to better understand dialogue.

While some theaters offer closed-captioning devices, these systems often malfunction, may be unavailable, or create barriers that discourage patrons from attending movies altogether. Open-captioned screenings remove these obstacles by creating an inclusive experience that allows everyone to enjoy films together without special equipment or advance requests.

Maryland has long been a leader in promoting equity and civil rights. Ensuring the regular availability of open-captioned movie screenings aligns with the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and reflects our state's commitment to full community participation. Other states and theater chains have already demonstrated that open captions are feasible, affordable, and widely welcomed by the public.



We respectfully ask you to support HB 435, which would require Maryland movie theaters to provide regularly scheduled open-captioned screenings and to work with advocates and community members to ensure meaningful implementation.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your continued commitment to accessibility for all Maryland residents. We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information or connect you with members of the community directly impacted by this issue.

Peacefully,

Payal Sweet

Metro South Asian Deaf Association (MSADA) Director