



February 12, 2026

Places of Public Accommodation – Open Movie Captioning

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Speech Language Hearing Association represents speech language pathologists and audiologists across Maryland. Collectively, we elevate and engage members to strive for excellence in serving those impacted by communication and related disorders through advocacy, equity, education, interprofessional collaboration, and leadership development.

We are writing in support of **SB 259/HB 435** to amend the current act to require motion picture houses with at least 4 screens to provide open movie captioning.

According to the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, there are approximately 1.2 million Deaf and Hard of Hearing Marylanders.¹ Captions not only create access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals but also benefit emerging readers, English Language Learners, individuals with learning disability and people of all ages.² This proposed bill will help support a more inclusive community.

We hope the committee will support this amendment to require motion picture houses with at least 4 screens to provide open movie captioning to help make places in public more accessible to all Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration

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¹ Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. (n.d.). *Maryland Department of Disabilities: Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)*. Maryland Open Data. <https://opendata.maryland.gov/stories/s/ODHH/edcn-a22p/>

² National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. (2025, December 4). *Captioned media*.
<https://nationaldeafcenter.org/resources/access-accommodations/captioned-media/>

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