



BILL: SB 665

POSITION: FWA – Favorable with Amendments

COMMITTEE: Government, Labor, and Elections

HEARING DATE: March 31, 2026

SUBMITTED BY: Maryland Department of Disabilities
217 East Redwood Street, Suite 1300, Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is pleased to submit this letter of support with amendments for **SB 665, Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals – Renaming**.

The bill's primary purpose is to rename the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) to the Office of the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing, and the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals to the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing Individuals. MDOD commends this important revision that formally recognizes the unique needs and identity of individuals who are Deafblind within our state government's structure.

MDOD's Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM) Program oversees the delivery of statewide Maryland Relay services that provide the Deaf, Deafblind, and hard of hearing communities with accessible telecommunications and teleconferencing services. TAM also has a Communication Facilitator Service, which focuses on meeting the highly individualized communications needs of Deafblind individuals. ODHH is a valuable partner for TAM and has a seat on the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay that oversees TAM.

MDOD requests an amendment to add MDOD as an ex officio member of the renamed Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing Individuals in order to further ensure collaboration and alignment between TAM and ODHH. This amendment would conform SB 665 to the same amendment made to the House cross-file, HB 439, which passed the House on February 28. The description of that amendment is attached to this letter.

Thank you for your consideration. MDOD respectfully requests a **favorable report with amendments on SB 665**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty".

Carol A. Beatty
Secretary, Department of Disabilities