

# SB 400

# Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture Houses - Captioning

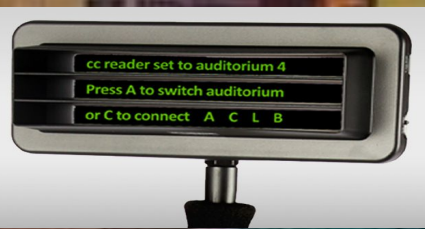
**There are over 1.2 million (19%) deaf or hard of hearing residents in Maryland**

*\*6.2 million people living in Maryland*

## Bill Summary:

The purpose of this bill is to make motion picture houses fair and equitable for our **deaf, hard of hearing, and non-English or non-native English-speaking** residents.

SB400 would require motion picture houses to **offer open captioning showings twice per week per film**. Only motion picture houses that have two or more operational locations in the state would be subject to this regulation (44 theaters). Additionally, "special" showings, such as a film that will only be shown for one night, are not subject to this regulation.



**Would you want to experience a movie through these?**

## What is the Cost?

- There is **no cost-out difference** between regular and open caption showings.
- By offering open caption showings, theaters could save costs on repairing closed captioning devices.
- 44 theaters would be required to show only two open captioned showings of a film in a week, but this change could benefit over 1.2 million Maryland residents
- More open captioned showings would **open theaters up to new audiences** that had previously avoided them due to lack of accessibility

**Why spend money on high tech closed captioning devices when open captioning is far easier?**

## Did you know?

- Open captioned showings have been **especially popular with senior citizens** in Hawaii - Speaker of Hawaii House of Representatives
- **Young people overwhelmingly prefer content with subtitles on**. The largest moviegoing demographic is 18-35 year olds
- 31% of **people would go to more live events if there were more captioning options available** - Stagertext Study

## What different types of captioning are there?

**Closed Captioning:** Optional captioning that can be turned on/ off by the user. This is the type of captioning present on your TV and streaming services.

**Open Captioning:** Captioning that is embedded in the film for all viewers to see and cannot be turned off. An open captioned film is a separate copy from the standard film.

## Who Benefits from Open Captions?

Being able to easily keep up with the dialogue on screen is a **benefit to more than just the deaf or hard of hearing**. Everyone has had that, "What did they say?" moment at a mumbled line.

Deaf, hard of hearing, English learner, veteran, senior, and regular audiences can benefit from open captioning.

## Why Change is Needed:

**"There's nothing like seeing a movie on the big screen!"**

Yet **deaf and hard of hearing audiences must experience their movie on a small screen**. The only current mandatory accommodations for these audiences are individual closed captioning devices, and **open captioned showings are currently offered only on a voluntary basis**.

These devices are uncomfortable, distracting, frequently out of synch, and often encounter technical issues. The setup and troubleshooting of these **devices cause users to miss crucial scenes of the movie**, making a less than favorable experience.

## Legislation in Other Places:

**Hawaii:** A theater company with more than two operational locations in the state shall offer two open captioned showings a week for every film that is offered with open captions.

**New York City:** Open-captioning must be offered for at least one-quarter of screenings of films that have four or more showings per week. At least half of open captioned showings for popular films should be at peak hours. Theaters must advertise all showings in the same manner.