



GOVERNOR'S COORDINATING OFFICES

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FISCAL YEAR 2024 OPERATING BUDGET HEARING MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

DIRECTOR KELBY BRICK, ESQ., CDI

**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE**
Delegate Kirill Reznik, Chair
Delegate Emily K. Shetty, Vice Chair
February 1, 2023

**SENATE BUDGET & TAXATION COMMITTEE
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE**
Senator Cory V. McCray, Chair
February 3, 2023

Greetings Chair and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to be here once again on behalf of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as its Director.

I would like to thank Legislative Analyst Naomi Komuro for her work in understanding our office. I know that Ms. Komuro has worked very hard to understand how the State is serving its Deaf and hard of hearing residents and how the State may do more. I am gratified that the DLS' budget analysis concurs with the Governor's allowance.

I am very grateful to our staff for working so hard and tirelessly to achieve so much in the past year as we transition into a new chapter of Maryland history in many areas including

strengthening the Deaf Ecosystem and increasing equity in communications, employment and education.

In the last fiscal year, as COVID-19 preventative measures began to wind down, we have had a series of meetings with agencies such as Maryland's Apprenticeship and Training Program, Motor Vehicle Administration, and the Department of Human Services to improve access to employment options and to improve access to the social services. We are in the midst of collaborating with the Behavioral Health Administration holding virtual stakeholder meetings by jurisdiction to identify gaps in local behavioral health services for the Deaf and hard of hearing. We have completed three jurisdictions, and will host two more next week.

The National Association of the Deaf recognized Maryland in the summer of 2022 as one of the top three states in providing access to COVID information via public TV broadcasts using American Sign Language interpreters and captioning in real time. In our transition reports we emphasized the importance of maintaining the top notch ASL and captioning access that many states have modeled after ours.

The Governor's Office is dedicated to making Maryland a better place for the 1.2 million Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders to live, work, raise a family, and retire. Our work will never be complete, but we are proud of our ongoing successes.

With your continued support and adoption of the Governor's budget proposal for our office, we will continue to be a leader for our nation in access to education, jobs, and support of the Deaf Ecosystem, a critical tool in combating the pervasive underemployment and unemployment that many Deaf and hard of hearing individuals experience, in changing Maryland for the better.

I am very much appreciative of your time here and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Please accept our official comments below to the analyst observations and recommendations as noted in the analysis document.

Key Observations

Page 5 Options to Regulate ASL in Maryland

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends committee narrative requesting that ODHH provide cost estimates for each of these policy recommendations to address fraudulent ASL interpretation.

The ODHH concurs with the DLS request.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions Page 8

1. Adopt the following narrative: Cost Estimates for Regulation of Interpreters:

ODHH concurs with the committee narrative to report on the Cost Estimates for Regulation of Interpreters due August 31, 2023.