

HOUSE BILL 678

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CF SB 358

By: **Delegates Spiegel, Acevero, Bartlett, Boyce, Charkoudian, Crutchfield, Fair, Foley, Kaiser, Kaufman, McComas, Pasteur, Roberson, Roberts, Rogers, Sample–Hughes, Wolek, and Woorman**

Introduced and read first time: January 24, 2025

Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library – Funding and Budget Submission**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an
4 appropriation to the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library; requiring the Deaf
5 Culture Digital Library to submit its annual operating budget to the State Library
6 Agency on or before a certain date each year; and generally relating to the Maryland
7 Deaf Culture Digital Library.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article – Education
10 Section 23–109
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Education**

16 23–109.

17 (a) The State Library Agency shall establish the Deaf Culture Digital Library as
18 the primary information center on deaf resources for library customers and staff in the
19 State.

20 (b) The Deaf Culture Digital Library shall:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (1) Conduct a needs assessment to identify gaps in library services for deaf
2 patrons and to implement strategies to fill the gaps and better coordinate library services
3 for the deaf;

4 (2) In coordination with the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of
5 Hearing, develop and provide sensitivity training for State and county library staff to help
6 them better understand deaf patrons and their needs;

7 (3) Develop a website that will allow for information sharing and
8 coordination between the Deaf Culture Digital Library and county library systems;

9 (4) In coordination with the State Library Agency, develop deaf-related
10 programs and materials and share them with county library systems and other libraries in
11 the State;

12 (5) Develop partnerships and strategic alliances with other entities,
13 including:

14 (i) The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;

15 (ii) County library systems;

16 (iii) The State Library Agency;

17 (iv) Veterans' groups;

18 (v) State and local arts councils;

19 (vi) Senior citizens organizations; and

20 (vii) Deaf and hard of hearing organizations, including:

21 1. The National Association of the Deaf;

22 2. The Hearing Loss Association of America; and

23 3. The Maryland Association of the Deaf;

24 (6) Encourage partnerships and collaborations with information service
25 providers to help provide virtual access to information and research;

26 (7) Form a Deaf Culture Digital Library Advisory Board to provide advice
27 on initiatives that further advance the mission and goals of the Deaf Culture Digital
28 Library and the majority of whose members are deaf or hard of hearing and selected from
29 the following entities:

30 (i) County library systems;

1 (ii) The State Library Agency;

2 (iii) The Governor’s Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;

3 (iv) Statewide deaf and hard of hearing organizations; and

4 (v) Other organizations as agreed on by the Governor’s Office of the
5 Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the State Library Agency; and

6 (8) Establish a Deaf Culture Digital Library “Friends of the Library” group
7 composed of individuals who are strongly committed, well–positioned, and able to promote
8 community involvement, advocacy, and funding for the Deaf Culture Digital Library.

9 (c) The lead employee or coordinator who manages the Deaf Culture Digital
10 Library shall be:

11 (1) A deaf or hard of hearing individual; and

12 (2) Knowledgeable and experienced concerning issues affecting deaf and
13 hard of hearing individuals.

14 **(D) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE**
15 **GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF**
16 **\$450,000 TO THE DEAF CULTURE DIGITAL LIBRARY.**

17 **(E) THE DEAF CULTURE DIGITAL LIBRARY SHALL SUBMIT ITS ANNUAL**
18 **OPERATING BUDGET TO THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1 EACH**
19 **YEAR.**

20 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
21 1, 2025.