



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

ODHH Monthly Bulletin

February 2011

A message from Director Lisa Kornberg

2011 is off to a great start and ODHH is busy with several projects to improve the quality of life for Marylanders with hearing loss.

Legislative Session in Maryland is here and we are busy planning our Second Annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legislative Awareness Day. Lt. Governor Brown has been confirmed to give the keynote address. As part of LAD, we will be celebrating ODHH's 10 Year Anniversary. There are only a few spaces left, so register now so you don't miss out.

We are also working on increasing video content on our website, participating in the development of a Visual Language Assistant Card for law enforcement officers, and continuing our training program that aims to increase the sensitivity and awareness of issues related to hearing loss for local, state, and federal government entities. As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office. I look forward to seeing you all at Legislative Awareness Day on February 21st!
-Lisa



Disability Income Tax Day in Baltimore

On Saturday, February 12, individuals with disabilities living in the Baltimore metropolitan region can take advantage of Disability Income Tax Day in Baltimore to obtain assistance in preparing their 2010 Income Taxes. Open to individuals receiving less than \$49,000, especially those receiving SSDI benefits, this FREE program will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at five locations throughout the region. To register or learn more about Disability Income Tax Day, contact the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) at 410-333-6119. Anyone needing special accommodations should call Dr. Nollie P. Wood, Jr., Mayor's Commission on Disabilities at 443-984-3170 no later than January 31, 2011.

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RSVP Now for Legislative Awareness Day

Legislative Updates



On January 12, 2011, The [Maryland General Assembly](#) convened for its 428th Legislative Session. Each year, legislators meet for 90 days to act on over 2,300 bills, including the State's annual budget. The session will end on Monday, April 11, 2011. ODHH is monitoring legislation for potential impact on Marylanders with hearing loss.

SENATE BILL 22: Election Law - Campaign Advertisements - Closed Captioning

This legislation will require captioning on campaign advertisements distributed via broadcast TV, cable TV, and on the Internet. It was introduced by Senator Stone (Dist. 6) and applies to candidates running for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and Comptroller.

The hearing for this bill was held on Tuesday, January 25, 2011. If you missed the hearing, there is still time to write to your legislator and ask that they support this important bill.

Quick Links

[ODHH Website](#)



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[Maryland.gov](#)

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Contact your Legislator

Contact your senator today and ask him or her to support Senate Bill 22 and work for its swift passage. You can find their email addresses and phone numbers at <http://www.mdelect.net>. [Click here](#) for a sample letter to send to your legislator about Senate Bill 22.

ODHH Budget Hearings

Senate Budget Hearing

Friday, February 11, 2011
1:00 PM

Senate Health and Human Services Subcommittee
Miller Senate Office Building - Verda Welcome Room
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

House Budget Hearing

Wednesday, February 16, 2011
1:00 PM

House Health and Human Resources Subcommittee
House Office Building - Room 150

If you are interested in submitting testimony either in writing or in person, or if you have any questions or comments, please see <http://odhh.maryland.gov/contact.html> or contact Julie Anne Schafer at jschafer@gov.state.md.us.

Community Perspective: The Impact of Showing Up

By: *Jessica Thurber, [Deaf Politics Founder](#) and Maryland Resident*



Last year, I attended a Legislative Awareness Day (LAD) event in Annapolis, MD that was hosted by the [Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#) (MDODHH). Each year, the Maryland General Assembly meets for 90 days to act on thousands of bills, but last year marked the first Maryland LAD event for the deaf and hard of hearing.

The LAD event gives deaf and hard of hearing constituents the chance to fully participate in Maryland General Assembly events and, more importantly, to meet with their Delegates and Senators. For Marylanders, this was an opportunity to express thoughts on any pending bills.

Being heard

LAD is critical because deaf and hard of hearing people, as a group, can become visible in the political sphere and, as a result, encourage positive changes during the legislative process.

Let me tell you a story.

I met with [Senator Raskin](#) of Montgomery County last year about [SB 68 - State Government - Human Relations - Closed-Captioning Activation Required](#). There was a debate going on in the Senate at the time on whether or not the bill should require establishments to have televisions with the caption feature turned on at all times, or to have it "upon request only". I was in the "at all times" camp and I presented to the Senator the perspective that not only people with hearing loss benefit from this bill, but that any person in a loud and noisy environment can benefit from having the caption feature turned on. Raskin saw and agreed with my point. While the bill that passed was for "upon request only", I was able to convince my Senator to support

ODHH on the Move

Second Annual Legislative Awareness Day

Monday, February 21
2 PM - 9 PM
House Office Building -
Room 145
Annapolis, MD

otherwise.

A few days after our meeting, Senator Raskin was asked to comment for a newspaper article about the bill. What he told them sounded very familiar; he used my explanation on why the bill should pass.

He listened.

Now imagine if deaf people from most counties in Maryland had spoken with their representatives. There is no doubt that the end picture could have been very different.

Next month

On February 21st, there will be [another LAD event](#) and I will be attending. As founder of Deaf Politics, there is a bill I am particularly excited about and that is [SB 22 - Election Law - Campaign Advertisements - Closed Captioning](#). Of course changes may be made before the final wording of the bill is decided, but the basic premise of the bill is to require candidates running for specific political offices to caption their campaign ads shown on television and the Internet.

The passage of this bill will bring us one step closer to full and equal access. When the time comes to perform the most important civic duty as citizens-which is to vote-we will have a better idea of who we would like to elect into office.

Event: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legislative Awareness Day

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
LEGISLATIVE AWARENESS DAY

Save the Date



ODHH is hosting a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legislative Awareness Day on Monday, February 21, 2011.

Location

House of Delegates Building
Baltimore City Delegation Room (RM 145)
Annapolis, MD

Registration

To register, visit the ODHH website at www.odhh.maryland.gov and click on the "Legislation" tab.

Schedule

2 PM
Advocacy Training

4 PM
Welcome and Award presentation

5 PM
Meetings with Legislators and Dinner on your own

8 PM
Participants may view House and/or Senate Sessions

Questions?

410-767-7793 (voice)
443-453-5954 (VP)
jschafer@gov.state.md.us



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Questions? Comments? Contact:

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