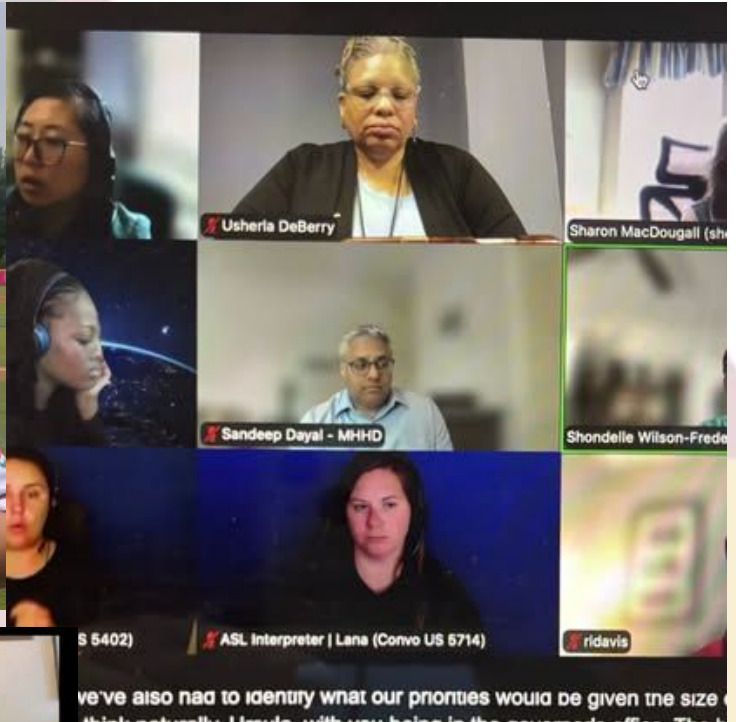


# Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing NEWSLETTER I.I FY2027



**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# REPORT

## Appointments

Please join in welcoming new members. We have a new member for MDOT - Director Robert Earl Lewis, Jr. Congratulations!

We are still waiting on Citizen w/Hearing Loss for seat #18.

## EHDI Committee

EHDI Best Practice Webinars. The webinars have been scheduled for the following dates and will take place from 12-1PM on Zoom:

- November 6, 2026: Audiology Best Practices with Rebecca Castro
- November 20, 2026: Early Intervention Best Practices with Christopher Chapman and Lisa Howey
- December 4, 2026: Pediatrician and Medical Home Best Practices with Carolyn Jenks

MDH staff are working on promotional materials for the webinars and will send additional updates when available. Thank you all for your continued support and work on this project.

For questions, please contact Yasmine Price by email at

[yasmine.price1@maryland.gov](mailto:yasmine.price1@maryland.gov).

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT Cont'd...**

## **2027 Maryland EHDI State Stakeholder Meeting — Call for Abstracts**

The Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program is accepting abstracts for its 2027 State Stakeholder Meeting.

- Purpose: Share information and best practices to improve services and outcomes for children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families.
- Focus: Early identification and connection to early intervention services, ideally by 6 months of age.
- Audience: Statewide providers, stakeholders, families, and professionals involved in Maryland's EHDI system.
- Abstract requirement: Submit a 250–500-word executive summary describing your proposed presentation.
- File format: Word document or PDF.
- Submission: Complete the online abstract submission form and upload your document.

### [Submit an Abstract](#)

This is an opportunity to present ideas, programs, research, or best practices that can strengthen Maryland's EHDI system and improve outcomes for D/HH children and their families.

### **Abstract Due Date:**

October 16, 2026

### **Abstract Submission Form:**

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/019fdc8d118b7b0bb21b1ef548801dd>

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT Cont'd...**

## **Workgroup for DDBHH - Dr. Leo Yates -**

- Currently interviewing DeafBlind individuals to include their voices as an addendum to our report.
- Plan to have a virtual townhall and an in-person townhall to receive more feedback from the wider Deaf community and DeafBlind community so we can make updates to our current report.
- Working with constituents like Marc Safman to gather more statistics related to the DeafBlind population to strengthen our report.
- Set up meetings with persons from the different state agencies that provide public services to get more details about their supports while providing advocacy for accessibility and inclusion.
- Plan a Workgroup meeting in October with these updates. Hopefully, by then, we will have the new member in place (remember, we were waiting for a DeafBlind representative).

## **SBSLI and Workgroup for DDBHH**

Followed up with the Appointment Office regarding the vacancies also followed up with Chair Leffler and Chair Yates regarding their reports.

## **BHAC Executive Committee Meeting Summary**

The BHAC Executive Committee meeting began with a discussion regarding survey from CLiC - Cultural Linguistics and Competency committee and pending update on membership to expand CLiC.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# REPORT

## **Mentor Interpreters**

Currently working with an interpreter that has re-enrolled in the CCBC NIC test prep class. Upon successful completion, the interpreter will get a token to pay for the performance exam. I am working on reviewing and providing support and feedback for the videos shared.

## **Educational Interpreters and Alternative Pathways Task Force for SBSLI**

The Alternative Pathways Taskforce is working to identify fair and competency-based pathways for qualified sign language interpreters to meet Maryland's licensing requirements. The Taskforce considers interpreters' education, experience, skills, and community-based expertise while supporting pathways that are accessible and responsive to Maryland's diverse interpreting community. The Taskforce meets biweekly to discuss recommendations and next steps.

Follow us here: [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [X](#) | [YouTube](#)

(insert SBSLI mtg dates)

## **Tri-State and DC Collaboration**

Update; We will be meeting to discuss and confirm the plans during our National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH) upcoming summit in November.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT Cont'd...**

## **Program Topics**

- Partner w/Health Empowerment Network of Maryland, Inc. Health Fair for DDBHH
- Deaf Culture II - Arundel Lodge
- Deaf Culture III - Statewide
- Disability in Democracy: Democracy vs Facism
- Deaf Cultural and Digital Library
- DDBHH Centered Medicaid vs. Medicare
- Interview by Chair Marcus Smith w/Eddie Martinez Jr. Living Independently in Maryland as a DeafBlind Marylander
- White Cane Event Walk w/DeafBlind
- Legislative Awareness and Awards and 25 year Anniversary
- First Responders and Open House

Such a collaboration positions the region as a leader in accessibility and demonstrates a shared commitment to ensuring that Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals have equitable access to services, information, and opportunities regardless of where they live or travel within the region.

## **GODDBHH Virtual Town Hall**

Hosted Saturday, August 22, 2026 at North Carroll Branch Library 2255 Hanover Pike Hampstead, MD 21704 in Carroll County, partnered with Maryland Association of the Deaf.

Usherla DeBerry, Director

# REPORT

## Proclamation - Deaf Awareness Month September 2026



### Proclamation

*From the Governor of the State of Maryland*

#### DEAF AWARENESS MONTH SEPTEMBER 2026

WHEREAS, Maryland is home to a large, vibrant, and diverse Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community; and

WHEREAS, It is vital that we, as Marylanders, work together to ensure that individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing have equal and full access to resources, services, and opportunities to participate in every aspect of community life; and

WHEREAS, Maryland recognizes the boundless potential of all its citizens, including those who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, and honors the contributions of the Deaf community throughout history and today; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is the proud home of the National Association of the Deaf, the oldest civil rights organization in the United States, as well as many other organizations that advocate for and empower the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland is committed to advancing equitable access and inclusion, including taking deliberate steps to ensure that government programs and services are accessible to all residents, regardless of hearing status; and

WHEREAS, For more than three decades, the Americans with Disabilities Act has affirmed the rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals to access inclusive education, achieve meaningful employment, and fully participate in recreational, cultural, and social life free from discrimination; and

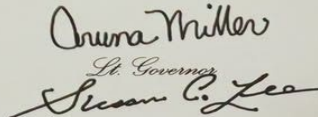
WHEREAS, Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals in Maryland contribute greatly to the strength of our state as educators, business owners, artists, medical professionals, community leaders, and citizens, and their contributions help sustain a thriving Deaf Ecosystem that benefits all Marylanders.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WES MOORE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, do hereby proclaim SEPTEMBER 2026 as DEAF AWARENESS MONTH in Maryland, and do commend this observation to all of our citizens.



Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland,  
this 1st day of September  
Two Thousand and twenty-six

  
Governor

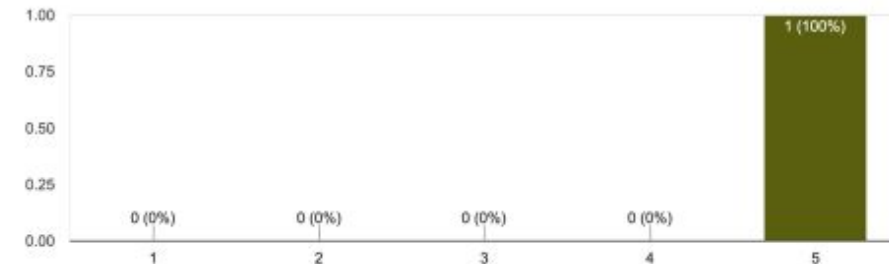
  
Lt. Governor  
Secretary of State

Usherla DeBerry, Director

# REPORT

## Disabilities in Democracy: Fascism vs Democracy 5/22/2026

How satisfied were you with the event?  
1 response



**Responses:** 1

### Summary:

One response was given, and they were satisfied with this event. Their key takeaway was that democracy should be fought for. Their feedback on the agenda is that it was good and there was clear communication.

More feedback regarding logistics was given after the meeting but was not recorded on the form.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT**

## **GODDBHH and MACDDBHH 25 Year Anniversary**

**Maryland Legislative Awareness and Awards Day  
Monday, October 12, 2026**

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us as we celebrate this important milestone together.

We welcome MACDDBHH members who are interested in contributing their time, ideas, experience, and expertise to this special initiative.

If you are interested in serving on the 25th Anniversary Planning Committee, please contact us for additional information.

### **Stay Tuned for the Logo Vote!**

We will also be asking the community to help us select the official ODDDBHH 25th Anniversary logo. Please stand by for the voting form, which will be shared by Tanea Brown.

We look forward to celebrating 25 years of history, progress, partnership, and service with our Maryland Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing.

### **DDBHH Incarcerated Individuals Relocated**

The DDBHH have relocated from Jessup to Hagerstown will have the next quarterly meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 11:00 AM.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# REPORT

## **Special thanks...**

On behalf of the Governor's Office of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, we extend our sincere gratitude to our legislative sponsors, partners, advocates, stakeholders, and community members for your dedication and support throughout the legislative session especially to Senator King, Delegate Bagnall, Delegate Bhandari, and Delegate Kaufman and their teams. We also extend thanks to MACDHH, SBSLI, Workgroup for DDBHH, MDAD, MDCC, PGCAD, BCAD, DCDL, HCAD, MDSC, GUAA-Free State, WSJD, MSDAA, TAM, DORS, MWADB, NASADHH, the interpreter community, GOFA, 2nd floor - Governor's Office staff, the Appointment Office, the Lt. Governor, and the Governor.

Your commitment to advancing accessibility, inclusion, and opportunities for Maryland's Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and DeafDisabled communities has been invaluable. Through your leadership, collaboration, testimony, advocacy, and engagement, important conversations were elevated and meaningful progress was made.

Legislative success is built through partnerships, and we deeply appreciate the time, expertise, and passion that each of you contributed during this session. Whether through sponsoring legislation, providing feedback, sharing lived experiences, or supporting community outreach efforts, your involvement helped ensure that the voices of Maryland's DDBHH communities were heard.

While there is always more work ahead, we are grateful for the relationships we have built and strengthened throughout this process. We look forward to continuing our collaboration as we work together to create a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive Maryland for all.

Thank you again for your partnership, advocacy, and unwavering support.

With appreciation,

Usherla DeBerry and Team

## Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

### Programs for Sign Language Interpreters

#### NIC/BEI Study Table

The NIC/BEI Study Table continued to provide interpreters with opportunities to prepare for certification exams through both virtual and in-person sessions. Virtual study sessions were held on **Tuesday, June 8, 2026, Tuesday, July 7, 2026, and August 8, 2026, and September 8, 2026** allowing participants from across the state to connect, collaborate, and strengthen their interpreting skills in an accessible online environment.



In-person and online(HYBRID) expect August online only study sessions were hosted at the FBCG an on **Saturday, June 13, 2026, Saturday, July 11, 2026, Saturday August 8, 2026, and Saturday, September 12, 2026**. These sessions created a supportive space for interpreters to engage in hands-on practice, discuss testing strategies, and build peer connections while preparing for the NIC and BEI certification exams.

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## State Board of Sign Language Interpreter (SBSLI)

SBSLI Board Open Meeting: Thursday, July 16, 2026



## Alternative Pathways Task Force Meeting



**The meeting dates list:** Wednesday, August 5, 2026 , Wednesday, August 19, 2026, Wednesday, and September 2, 2026

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## State Training For ASL

### Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

July 16, 2026

The Governor's Office of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (GODDBHH) provided a one-hour virtual training focused on Deaf culture and basic American Sign Language (ASL).

The training included:

- **15–30 minutes:** An introduction to Deaf culture, followed by a question-and-answer session.
- **30 minutes:** Introduction to basic ASL signs and commonly used phrases.
- **Total attendance:** 9 participants.

### Additional Outreach and Training Development

GODDBHH has also been working with the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) to coordinate **four training sessions**, each focusing on different themes related to Deaf culture and ASL. These sessions are intended to expand awareness, improve communication, and provide participants with practical tools for interacting with Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals.

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Maryland Language Advisory Board (MLAB)

- Monday, July 13, 2026
- Monday, August 17, 2026

## Language Access Implementation Meeting Dates

**Attendees:** Dan Doggett -MDOD- John Brennan -MDOD- Mari Dorn-Lopez -GOCI- Pratikshya Mudvari -GOV- Tanéa Brown -ODHH-

- Wednesday, July 15, 2026
- Wednesday, July 29, 2026
- Wednesday, September 2, 2026

## Meetings Set up by Language Access Implementation

- Working Session - Equal Access to Public Services for Individuals with Disabilities- July 15, 2026
- Language Access & Disability Inclusion Community Needs Roundtable

**Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager**

# REPORT

## Membership/Committee

- **PCRID Board Meetings**
  - Thursday, July 30, 2026
- **Quarterly GABTR Meeting**
  - Tuesday, July 28, 2026



## Conference

- **Eastern Regional Conference (Volunteered)**
  - Friday, July 17, 2026 to Saturday, July 18, 2026

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Community Engagement & Outreach Highlights

GODDBHH continued to strengthen community engagement and outreach through participation in events, health initiatives, DeafBlind programs, and community gatherings throughout Maryland.

- **MDCC Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony & MDCC Deaf Fest** — Friday, August 21, 2026, in Frederick, MD, from 11:00 AM–4:00 PM.
- **Chesapeake Baysox Deaf Night & First Pitch** — September 4, 2026, in Bowie, MD. GODDBHH participated in Deaf Night, with Director Usherla DeBerry and Laura Egharebha of Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM), Department of Disabilities, participating in the ceremonial first pitch.
- **Monthly Health Check Program: “Bring Care to You” DBHH Health Fair 2026** — September 5, 2026. GODDBHH provided ASL interpreter support to help ensure effective communication and access for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community members.
- **DeafBlind Camp of Maryland 2026** — West River, MD. GODDBHH participated in this community-focused event supporting connection, accessibility, and engagement within the DeafBlind community.
- **Community Loss and Support** — On September 10, 2026, GODDBHH staff attended the funeral of Ethel Gregory to honor her life and offer support to her family and community.



Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## GDDBDHH Social Media Video Production

Developed, edited, and published videos for GDDBDHH social media platforms to support outreach and public awareness efforts. All videos included closed captions (CC) to promote accessibility and effective communication for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing audiences.

## **Weekly ASL Update from the Moore/Miller Administration**

- **June 1, 2026** — ASL video project completed and published.
- **June 25, 2026** — ASL video content completed and published.
- **July 1, 2026** — ASL video project completed and published.
- **July 14, 2026** — Produced **11 short-form reels**

**Other Video Projects:** GODDBHH continued to develop and produce ASL and informational video content to increase community awareness, provide accessible information, and strengthen outreach to the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities.

- **SB 866 Explanation Video** — ASL informational video featuring Marcus Smith and Leo Yates.
- **Poor Air Quality & Governor's Message** — ASL video released July 17, 2026, providing information about poor air quality and a message from Governor Wes Moore.
- **Monthly Health Check – “Bring Care to You”** — Developed a four-part announcement video series promoting the 2026 DBHH Health Fair.
- **Welcome to MACDHH Chair Marcus Smith** — ASL welcome and introduction video.
- **Maryland Board of Elections** — Produced a six-video ASL series providing accessible election-related information.
- **Why I Sign Campaign** — Produced more than 20 videos highlighting individuals' experiences and reasons for signing.
- **Interpreter Shortage Video Project** — Produced a five-video series addressing the interpreter shortage and the importance of interpreter access for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4wf1b5PVv91b45VugqeFiA>

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Professional Development

- **Women in Leadership: Why We Need More Women at the Top** — Participated in a professional development session focused on the importance of women in leadership, representation, and increasing opportunities for women in leadership roles. The session provided an opportunity for reflection and professional growth.
- **Professional Development Resource:** [Watch the YouTube presentation](#)

**Diamon Halliburton, Administrative Assistant/Legislative Liaison**

# REPORT

## Interactions

As of June 1, 2026, GODHH has received 58 calls, 0 walk-in(s), and 68 email inquiries. The general reasons for inquiring are related to interpreter needs, housing, and mental health. A total of 96 customer interactions with a 100% response rate.



## Departmental Submissions

Submissions and a list of pending responses can be found at

<https://odhh.maryland.gov/departmental-submissions/>

## List of programs hosted or collaborated

- Stakeholders Information Meeting
- Sponsors Information Meeting
- Stakeholder and Sponsors Information meeting
- NIC/BEI Study Table
- Chesapeake Baysox Deaf and HoH Night
- Health Empowerment Network Monthly Health Check Event - Check Your Health

## Reports

- Total of 3 monthly reports sent to Deputy Legislative Officer Hannah Dier regarding legislative matters during the interim.
- Departmental Concepts - Due June 26, 2026 - **COMPLETE**
- Joint Chairmen's Report #1 - Due July 1, 2026 - **COMPLETE**
- Joint Chairmen's Report #2 - Due August 15, 2026 - **COMPLETE**
- Managing for Results (MFR) - Due Fall 2026 - **COMPLETE**
- Joint Chairmen's Report #3 - Due December 15, 2026
- Annual Report - Due December 31, 2026

Diamon Halliburton, Administrative Assistant/Legislative Liaison

# REPORT

## Joint Chairmen's Report

The Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) is an official document published annually in Maryland by the nonpartisan Department of Legislative Services. It summarizes and explains the final actions taken on the state's operating and capital budgets after the legislative session ends. Our office has three reports due this year.

1. D11A04.01 ODHH Restricts funds until ODHH submits two reports on the development and implementation of licensing requirements for sign language interpreters by July 1, 2026, and December 15, 2026. **As of July 1, 2026, the first report has been submitted to the Committee.**

2. D11A04.01 ODHH Restricts funds until ODHH submits a report on vacant positions by August 15, 2026. **As of August 16, 2026, the report has been submitted.**

Part one of the development and implementation of licensing requirements for sign language interpreters and the report on vacant positions has been submitted and the funds restricted have been released.

Page 43:

[https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/RecurRpt/Joint-Chairmens-Report\\_Vol-I\\_2026.pdf](https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/RecurRpt/Joint-Chairmens-Report_Vol-I_2026.pdf)

## JUNE SPOTLIGHT

# June Father's Day Spotlight



**Martelle Alonza Washington** is a DeafBlind Special Educator/Teacher of the Deaf for Prince George's County Public Schools District. He is also a loving father to one daughter, who is currently entering her final year of college at the University of Texas @ San Antonio where she is an Art major focusing on art history and architecture designs.

Martelle Washington has served classrooms for Los Angeles Unified School District, DC Public Schools before finding his special home at Doswell E. Brooks Elementary School for PGCPs, where he serves as a DHOH Resource Teacher serving over 70 Deaf students from grades Pre-K 2 all the way up to 5th grade.

Martelle Washington is passionate about serving the Deaf community of students, especially Deaf students with additional disabilities. Along with a co-teacher, Martelle coordinates and manages parent-engagement nights at Doswell E Brooks while also holding a position on the school's Leadership Team. The purpose of parent -engagement is to bridge communication barriers deaf and hard of hearing students face with their hearing parents. Students, parents and teachers engage in meetings about deaf culture, language deprivation, deaf socialization, and learning ASL to develop a foundational language for all of DHOH students at Doswell E. Brooks.

Martelle Washington work in the deaf community is guided by two quotes:

"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." -Jackie Robinson

"If I am not useful, then I am useless." -Maya Angelou

## JULY SPOTLIGHT

# July is Mental Health Awareness Month

**JULY 2026**

**BIPOC**  
MENTAL HEALTH  
AWARENESS MONTH

**Professional Spotlight**



**MICHELLE  
REYES**

Learn More about Michelle  
on our newsletter!



**Michelle Reyes, LICSW** is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) with extensive experience providing trauma-informed counseling, advocacy, and mental health services to individuals with disabilities across higher education and community-based settings. A native of New York City, Michelle has dedicated much of her career to serving Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and disabled individuals, using her fluency in American Sign Language (ASL) to provide accessible, culturally responsive, and affirming mental health care.

Throughout her career, Michelle has worked with adolescents, adults, and families experiencing anxiety, depression, trauma, grief, relationship concerns, and life transitions. She is passionate about helping individuals build resilience, develop effective coping strategies, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and improve their overall well-being through compassionate, evidence-based care. In addition to direct clinical services, Michelle is committed to reducing barriers to mental health care and promoting disability inclusion through advocacy, education, and collaboration with community partners.

Michelle's commitment to disability advocacy is also deeply personal. As the proud mother of a child with Down syndrome, she understands the importance of accessible services, family-centered support, and strong community resources. This lived experience enhances her professional perspective and fuels her dedication to empowering individuals and families while fostering inclusive environments where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. She remains committed to advancing equity, accessibility, and mental health within diverse communities.

## AUGUST SPOTLIGHT

# August is National Wellness Month



"Hi! I'm **Karla Marrero**, founder and creator of Taína Diverse Essentials.

My journey into natural body care began in 2012, when I discovered my passion for creating handcrafted products. In 2020, I officially established Taína Diverse Essentials, turning that passion into my own small business. I create handcrafted natural soaps, solid lotions, candles, and body-care products, thoughtfully made with natural ingredients, creativity, and care.

Taína Diverse Essentials is about more than body care. It represents self-care, diversity, creativity, and the joy of creating something special for others. Every product is handcrafted with love and designed to bring a little comfort and care into your everyday routine. I'm proud of how far this journey has come—from discovering my passion in 2012 to building Taína Diverse Essentials into what it is today.

Taína Diverse Essentials — handcrafted with purpose, naturally inspired, and made with love.

— Karla, TDE"

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1C8g4rCrrk/>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/taina\\_diverse\\_essentials?igsi=Zm53enlwODd3OWhu](https://www.instagram.com/taina_diverse_essentials?igsi=Zm53enlwODd3OWhu)

Etsy: <https://tdessentials.etsy.com>

# Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Tributes



## **Deborah Anita Ware**

On behalf of the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Deborah Anita Ware on her passing.

Deborah, affectionately known as "D'bora," lived a life defined by creativity, self-expression, and a deep connection to the Deaf community. A proud graduate of Model Secondary School for the Deaf, she embraced opportunities to cultivate her talents from an early age, participating in theater, music, and the performing arts. Her passion for artistic expression remained a lifelong hallmark, reflected in her love of fashion, jewelry design, painting, music, and dance.

Throughout her career, Deborah demonstrated professionalism and dedication while working in the Washington, D.C. legal community. Beyond her many professional accomplishments, she was admired for her vibrant personality and artistic gifts, which made her a familiar and cherished presence within the Deaf communities of Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, and beyond.

As we remember Deborah Anita Ware, we celebrate a life that touched many through creativity, friendship, and service to her community. May her memory continue to inspire those who knew her, and may her family find comfort in the lasting impact she made.

With our deepest sympathy, we honor Deborah's life and extend our sincere condolences to all who mourn her loss.

With respect and gratitude,  
Director Usherla DeBerry  
Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
July 6, 2026

# Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Tributes



## **Chester Kuscmider**

On behalf of the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, we extend our deepest condolences to the family, friends, colleagues, students, and the entire Maryland School for the Deaf community on the passing of Chester Kuscmider.

Mr. Kuscmider dedicated much of his life to serving Deaf students through education, athletics, and mentorship. His longstanding commitment to the Maryland School for the Deaf left a lasting impact on generations of students who benefited from his guidance, encouragement, and unwavering belief in their potential.

Throughout his distinguished career, Chester was recognized as a respected coach, mentor, and advocate for student success. Whether leading athletic programs, supporting academic achievement, or fostering confidence and teamwork among young people, he exemplified the values of dedication, perseverance, and service.

His contributions to baseball, football, softball, and other athletic programs helped shape not only successful teams but also strong, capable individuals prepared to meet life's challenges.

Beyond his accomplishments on the field, Chester's influence was felt throughout the Deaf community. He was known for his patience, generosity, and commitment to empowering Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. His efforts helped create opportunities for young people to excel academically, athletically, and personally.

The legacy Chester Kuscmider leaves behind will continue to inspire students, educators, coaches, and community members for years to come. His impact extends far beyond wins and championships; it lives on in the confidence, discipline, pride, and sense of belonging he instilled in those whose lives he touched.

We honor his service, celebrate his contributions, and remember him with gratitude and respect.

With deepest sympathy,  
*Director Usherla DeBerry*  
Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing

# Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Tributes



**Ethel Gregory**

Ethel M. Gregory, beloved mother, friend, and cherished member of the Deaf community, peacefully transitioned on August 13, 2026, at the age of 92.

Born on February 9, 1934, in Alabama, Ethel was a proud native Alabamian who grew up Deaf in a hearing world. From an early age, she demonstrated the resilience, determination, strength, and joyful spirit that would define her life. Ethel attended the Alabama School for the Deaf, where she received her education and formed many fond memories and lifelong friendships. Her years at the school remained among some of her most treasured experiences.

Faith played a central role in Ethel's life. She was an active and devoted member of the Deaf community and Deaf ministry for many years. Ethel was part of the historic Silent Mission, one of the oldest Black Deaf ministries, under Shiloh Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

Later, she became a member of the Deaf Ministry at First Baptist Church of Glenarden, where she continued to worship, serve, encourage others, and share her faith. She was also a faithful supporter of the Anointed Hands Sign Language Interpreting Ministry.

Ethel's passing leaves a tremendous void in the hearts of all who loved her, especially her family, including her four children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and extended family and friends. Yet her legacy of faith, grace, love, strength, and service will continue through the many lives she touched throughout her 92 years. While we mourn her passing, we also rejoice in the blessing of having known and loved Ethel M. Gregory. We give thanks to God for the gift of her life and for the example she gave us through her strength, compassion, faith, and devotion. Though she will be deeply missed on earth, we find comfort in knowing that she has gone home to be with the Lord.

"Well done, good and faithful servant."

May her memory continue to be a blessing to all who knew and loved her.

With deepest sympathy,

*Director Usherla DeBerry*

Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing

# The Governor's Office of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing **Social Media Platform**



**Follow us @MDGOVODHH**