



March 5, 2019

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
The Honorable Tawanna Gaines, Vice Chair Members of the Committee
House Committee on Appropriations
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: HB 1192

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh, Vice Chair Gaines and Committee Members:

On behalf of the ACI Alliance membership in Maryland, we write asking your support for **HB 1192**, the *Equal Access for Marylanders with Hearing Loss Act*. This act will allow for those with hearing loss to interact with and impact their communities better when they have the opportunity to participate and hear in public spaces. It is often hard to impossible to understand presentations and conversations at public hearings, PTA meetings, and the like and the best technology available mitigates these troublesome situations. Therefore, we support the installation of hearing loops in state funded buildings.

The American Cochlear Implant Alliance promotes research, advocacy, and awareness of 21st century hearing technology as well as supporting families and users of CI technology which provides the ability to hear. The organization supports families and users of cochlear implants and other hearing technologies to maximally benefit from such technologies.

Hearing loops are a reliable and easy to use assistive listening device that sends a signal directly to a person's hearing aid or cochlear implant, with no need for a special receiver for most people who utilize 21st century hearing technology. For people with mild hearing loss who do not use personal hearing devices, the signal can be accessed via headphones. Installation of a hearing loop system during new construction and renovation is cost effective. The bill does not require that current buildings be retrofitted and includes a waiver process.

By passing this legislation, those with hearing loss will experience important access benefits and enhanced quality of life that will have long lasting benefits. We ask you to support **HB 1192**.

Sincerely,

Nichole Westin
Government Policy Manager
American Cochlear Implant Alliance