

Addressed to:
Rep. Ann Pugh
Chair, House Human Services Committee
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Date: 1-23-2020

I'm writing in response as a deaf Vermonter from Middlebury, Vermont and wish to see the bill H. 312 be passed based on my experience that there are difficulties in accessing captions in most theaters. I've very rarely gone to theaters due to the fact there is streaming service online at home such as Netflix that's extremely convenient, however at least one theater I know of that offers such a service is at Essex which is more than an hour away to drive up north.

I've attended a theater in Williston, Vermont that had captioning back in 2012 which worked but failed me the next time I went back there again a year later. They claimed that it wasn't working when all their devices should be functioning 24/7 at all times. Closed captioning is done with a goose neck stand attached to a black box with a screen inside which goes into the seat cup holder and designed not to distract other patrons. This theater required handing over a driver's ID in order to use one of their 'black box' caption devices. I don't know if they still offer it now.

But in my local area theater in Middlebury, they have no captioning whatsoever. It's surprising to me that as a deaf person in my late 40s, there are other people much older than I that suffer from hearing loss as well and don't get this kind of service in The Marquis theater and also the town hall theater.

I've had to forgo watching one of my favorite films that was a sequel a few years ago in this theater due to the density of dialogue in detail that I may miss out on. I managed to watch via a streamed service which became available later on that allowed me to understand the story better. It's also the case with a most recent Star Wars film release that I missed out on a lot of details due to the lack of it which was frustrating.

It is beyond disturbing that most theaters in Vermont don't have captioning when others outside of this state actually do. I used to love going to theaters when I was younger in another state with friends but here, it became isolating.

There is no cost in using a toggle feature to turn on subtitles as long as it's requested by the deaf or hard of hearing person. The local theaters need to realize they can lose a lot of business if something is not done.

Thank you,
-Adam Glazer

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