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February 5, 2020

Rep. Ann Pugh
Chair, House Human Services Committee
Vermont State House
115 State St.
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Rep. Pugh,

I'm writing to encourage you to support H.312, which requires Vermont theaters to provide showings of movies with open captioning.

The mission of the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights is to advance the human and civil rights of people with disabilities to ensure full and equal participation in all aspects of community life and the political process. VCDR is composed of about 24 member groups, including local and statewide organizations of Vermonters with disabilities, parents, advocates and service providers.

We are aware that about 60,000 Vermonters, most of whom are elderly, have hearing loss and are at risk of social isolation. Many Vermonters with hearing loss have stopped going to the movies because they don't understand the dialog. Offering a small number of open caption screenings would bring many people back to the theater.

Turning on open captions is as simple as adding subtitles to movies streamed at home. And there is no cost. Providing some movies with captions would meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and potentially create a new revenue stream for theaters—clearly a win-win situation. H.312 requires open caption

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screenings to be clearly identified on all marketing materials so that movie-goers can choose showings with or without captions, depending on their preference.

VCDR strongly supports H.312, and we hope you will as well.
Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Lauderdale".

Sarah Lauderdale
President

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