



DIVISION ON DEAF, DEAFBLIND AND HARD OF HEARING

DATE: Tuesday January 16, 2018

TO: House Communications and Technology Committee

FROM: Annie Urasky
Director, Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing
Michigan Department of Civil Rights

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 400

Chair Hoitenga and Members of the House Communications and Technology Committee,

As Director of the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing, my role is to promote the mission of the Division to affirm the indisputable right to equal and effective communication for Michiganders who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

SB 400 will directly impact the lives of Michiganders who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing with communication access in situations involving public safety. Ease of access to state 911 services in this state should be a priority.

Michiganders who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing are part of an extremely diverse community when it comes to communication options and methods. Technology has a direct impact on how we communicate with the world at large. This is highlighted significantly in emergency situations. In typical emergency situations, many in our communities would often rely on an individual who can hear to make a live phone call to 911 responders.

However, the emerging technologies outlined in the Next Generation 911 (NG911) legislation will allow for efficient and comprehensive services when communicating with state 911 services. To empower Michiganders who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing with the option to directly send a text, photo and/or video to emergency responders will fully enhance the ability to safely and quickly connect with 911 responders; this benefit outweighs the cost of not supporting this important legislation.