



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

May 26, 2017

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller
President of the Senate
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with Article II Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, Senate Bill 1034 – Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission – Funding and Video Streaming will become law without my signature.

I have been an outspoken proponent of making government more transparent and accessible to the citizens of Maryland, and that is why our administration submitted legislation to livestream video and audio of all General Assembly floor sessions, committee meetings and voting sessions. We also provided \$1.2 million in the budget to accommodate the costs associated with livestreaming, an amount which was calculated and deemed sufficient by the independent Department of Legislative Services. It is not acceptable in this modern era that Maryland is one of only seven states which does not livestream video and audio of their legislative floor sessions. In fact, it is shameful that we do not provide this service to our citizens.

The legislation we submitted did not pass - nor did it receive a vote in either chamber of the General Assembly. Instead, Senate Bill 1034 passed, which mandates that \$500,000 be appropriated to Maryland Public Broadcasting each year, and that they televise the State of the State Address, State of the Judiciary Address, and the last two weeks of the legislative session. This measure is not remotely adequate to provide needed transparency, considering there are another 76 days of the legislative session that will not be livestreamed. Don't the citizens of the State of Maryland deserve to watch their government at work for the rest of the legislative session as well?

There is no reason that Maryland is so far behind 43 other states on providing our citizens the ability to view the deliberations of their elected representatives in real-time, given that the technology is readily available and adequate funding was provided in the budget that we proposed.

I fear this legislation is ultimately an attempt to fool our citizens into thinking that their leaders support full transparency, when in reality, they are simply trying to prevent efforts to achieve it.

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While this is a pitifully small step toward transparency, I will not be signing this legislation and will allow this legislation to become law without my signature. I will again call for Maryland to join nearly all other States in livestreaming every day of their legislative session, and I hope that the General Assembly will support me in that effort next session.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor

cc: The Honorable Michael E. Busch