

TO: Chair McCray, Vice Chair Schleifer, and Members of the Budget & Appropriations Committee

FROM: David Schmidt

My name is David Schmidt. I am a resident and homeowner in Baltimore City District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of Council Bill 25-0036- Baltimore City Payment in Lieu of Taxes Task Force, and urge a favorable report with no weakening amendments.

I am a Baltimore City Public School Teacher who is acutely aware of the incoming impact of cuts to federal funding and state funding, as well as the City's ongoing budget deficit of roughly 85 million. In the fact of our budget challenges, we must ensure that our public school and parks and recreation systems are equitable, which means ensuring that all students have access to safe and reliable public transportation to get to and from school, as well as a variety of enrichment options after school and at recreation centers. I know that access to safe and reliable transportation is a huge problem that will require a lot of money for us to begin to address, and that students and families need more options for after school activities that run all year. I believe that holding our anchor institutions accountable for paying their fair share is one way to help achieve this.

In the past, Baltimore City Public Schools has experienced funding cuts that led to teacher layoffs to help balance the City budget. Our anchor institutions benefit from all of the public services paid for by taxpayers, including the public school system. Last year these anchor institutions only paid \$7 million while spending roughly \$48, and I believe that they should be contributing significantly more to the Baltimore City coffers. What the anchor institutions do not pay is covered by taxpayers. That means that last year, taxpayers were left to pay for \$41 million in services used by the anchor institutions who earn significant revenues which they reinvest into developing their properties and adjacent neighborhoods, as well as to pay their executives exuberant salaries. We know that they can afford to pay more, and we could use that money to support students and families of Baltimore City Public Schools.

An improved PILOT program could have contributed to funding to improve access to safe and reliable transportation for our public school students, or to increase funding for afterschool programs at public schools and parks and recreation centers. All residents and their families should have access to transportation that is timely and safe to get to and from school. Likewise, all students should have access to after school programs at local schools and parks to help them develop relationships with positive role models and discover and grow their interests.

Please support the Improved PILOT bill to help us get our budget in order so that we have the funding necessary to survive the cuts to State and Federal funding that will impact our public schools. I respectfully urge this committee to pass Council Bill #25-0036 without any weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

David Schmidt