

Yacob_Castro_de_Almeida_Bill #25-0036_Support – Oral Testimony

May 13, 2025

Baltimore, Maryland

Chair McCray, Vice Chair Schleifer, and members of the committee:

My name is Yacob Castro de Almeida. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 5 and I speak in support of Council Bill 25-0036 the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Task Force.

Under Maryland law and the Baltimore City Charter, nonprofit institutions including Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland Medical System are exempt from paying property taxes on land used for charitable, educational, or religious purposes.

However, these institutions collectively own substantial real estate portfolios within city limits. Johns Hopkins alone is Baltimore's largest private employer and maintains extensive holdings in East Baltimore and beyond. The combined footprint of such institutions reduces the volume of taxable property in the city, thereby narrowing the city's recurring revenue stream.

The State of Maryland's Department of Legislative Services and national studies including those from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy have documented that cities with a high percentage of tax-exempt property often rely on PILOT agreements to recapture foregone revenue.

This bill does not impose taxes. It merely establishes a formal task force to evaluate current exemptions, review comparable agreements in peer cities, and propose equitable frameworks for voluntary contributions.

Creating this Task Force aligns with precedents in cities such as Boston and Philadelphia, which have both implemented PILOT programs that generate millions annually in supplementary funding for city services.

In summary: the bill is lawful, procedurally sound, fiscally prudent, and reflective of national best practices.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on Council Bill #25-0036 with no weakening amendments.

Thank you.