

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR

ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR

100 N. HOLIDAY STREET

BALTIMORE MD, 21202

HEARING NOTES

Bill: 25-0100

Title: Children and Youth Fund - Updates

Committee: Education, Youth, & Older Adults

Chaired by: John Bullock

Hearing Date: 7/24/2025

Time (Beginning): 12:39 PM

Time (Ending): 3:36 PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Attendance: Approximately 50

Committee Members in Attendance: Bullock, Parker, Torrence, Blanchard, Jones, Ramos

Bill Synopsis in the file? YES NO N/A

Attendance sheet in the file? YES NO N/A

Agency reports read? YES NO N/A

Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? YES NO N/A

Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? YES NO N/A

Evidence of notification to property owners? YES NO N/A

Final vote taken at this hearing? YES NO N/A

Motioned by:

Seconded by:

Final Vote:

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

Major speakers for the Committee and Council included:

- Chair John Bullock
- Vice Chair Mark Parker
- Council President Zeke Cohen

Presenters included:

- Jeffrey Hochstein from the Law Department
- Melissa Brume representing Baltimore City Public Schools
- Ty'lor Schnella representing the Mayors Office of Government Affairs
- Representative from the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success
- The Comptroller Bill Henry
- KC Keller also from the Comptroller's office
- Alysia Lee the President and CEO of the Baltimore Children and Youth Fund

Major Issues Discussed

- Chair Bullock introduced the hearing and the bill.
- Vice Chair Parker provided an additional introduction and a detailed overview of the bill and its text.
- Chair Bullock then moved to agency reports, beginning with the Law Department, represented by Jeffrey Hochstein. The Law Department indicated the bill could be approved for legal form and sufficiency with the amendments proposed by the sponsor.
- The Department of Finance presented its agency report, represented by Laura Laursen. The Department of Finance opposed the bill.
- The Public School System, represented by Melissa Brume, testified and proposed two amendments that would allow them to support the bill if adopted.
- The Youth Commission was represented by the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success.
- The Comptroller's Office testified, represented by Deputy Comptroller Kaycee Keller and Comptroller Bill Henry, who supported the bill as amended.
- The Comptroller stated he was unaware that the Department of Finance opposed the bill. He explained that the Comptroller's Office is currently at capacity and would need to hire additional auditors to conduct the required audits.
- He noted that the Charter Review Committee has been engaged in conversations with the Comptroller's Office regarding increased audit responsibilities, and that funding for additional audits may already be under discussion. However, this legislation would specifically require additional funding to hire more staff.
- The Comptroller stated that the legislative intent was to address concerns that Black-led, community-based organizations were not receiving philanthropic support. He noted that the

optics of the situation led some to scrutinize the spending of public funds more closely because the funds are taxpayer dollars.

- He also corrected the record, stating that audits of the Youth Fund were publicly available on the Comptroller's website and were not specifically sent to City auditors, but were made publicly accessible.
- Councilmember Torrence questioned why the audit cost was so high and why an audit had not previously been ordered.
 - o The Comptroller responded that the office would need an additional audit team, as it is currently at full capacity. He added that hiring an additional team would allow the office to complete more audits overall.
- The Baltimore City Children and Youth Fund (BCYF) provided a presentation.
- **Requested amendments:**
 - o Remove grantmaking processes from statute
 - o Remove prior-year expenditure caps
 - o Adjust conflict-of-interest restrictions
 - o Preserve fiscal sponsorship
 - o Avoid Board expansion without additional support
 - o Align reporting requirements with the MOU
 - o Remove vague demographic language
- **Predicted impacts if passed as written:**
 - o Delayed grant cycles
 - o Fewer eligible organizations
 - o Legal conflicts
 - o Erosion of trust
 - o Fewer youth served
- The Chair then moved to public testimony.
- The Council President gave remarks, expressing excitement about the number of individuals who testified and shared how BCYF has supported them or their organizations. He emphasized the continued need for BCYF and stated that the legislation is intended to strengthen the Fund. He also noted that the bill sponsor is open to ongoing conversations to ensure the legislation works for all stakeholders, and stressed the importance of working together to achieve high standards.

- The Chair reiterated that there would be no voting session on the bill that day.
- Vice Chair Parker delivered closing remarks, thanking everyone who testified and shared their experiences. He emphasized that effective legislation is developed by putting ideas forward, receiving feedback, and making adjustments, and expressed appreciation for the feedback received both prior to and during the hearing.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes **No**

If yes, describe.

Juliane Jemmott,

Date: 12/22/2025

Cc: Bill File
OCS Chrono File