



Testimony
Bill 25-0036: Fair Share PILOT Taskforce
Position: **FAVORABLE**

To Chair Dani McCray and Members of the Budget & Appropriations Committee,

My name is Donna Johnson. I'm a healthcare worker, lifelong resident of Baltimore, and a homeowner in District 9. My family members own homes all across the city. We pay such high property taxes because so much of the city's land is owned by wealthy, tax exempt institutions. I urge this Committee to issue a **favorable** report on Bill 25-0036, with **no weakening** amendments.

I pay *more* than my fair share in property taxes to fund vital services that our city needs to thrive - it's time for tax exempt anchor institutions to pay their fair share too. I used to receive escrow checks that I would spend on essentials, but since the property taxes have gone up again, I am not getting those checks anymore. My family is feeling the burden of the rising cost of living while CEOs of nonprofit anchor institutions get multi-million dollar salaries.

I'm a grandmother, so youth safety is my number one concern. With the budget shortfall, the City may not have enough funding for violence prevention programs that help keep our children safe. I'm also worried about the funding freeze on the fire department. Fires burn more quickly and the smoke is more toxic compared to a few decades ago. As a healthcare worker, I know that emergency response times are very important. Not all neighborhoods have fire departments close by. Our fire department needs more resources.

Transparency is so important, especially when our democracy is under attack on a federal level. The PILOT Task Force, with equal representation and a fair funding formula, will make sure that the next PILOT agreement is a democratic process that produces a fair agreement. The average Baltimorean should have their voice heard in the PILOT negotiation. No more backroom deals! Please vote YES on this bill. Thank you.