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Testimony In Support Of Bill #25-0036  
Property Taxes— Baltimore City Payment in Lieu of Taxes Task Force

My name is Abby Rammelkamp. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 14. 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 retired Department of Defense employee, where I worked for 33 years, brought up two children in Baltimore who graduated from city public schools, and have owned property in Baltimore City for 39 years. I have paid taxes in Baltimore for decades and have benefited from the facilities and amenities that my taxes have made possible.

Baltimore is fortunate to be home to major educational and medical institutions, which are sources of jobs and services as well as civic pride. The downside of their presence here is that they are tax exempt and have bought up large and increasing amounts of valuable property, while using city services, which puts the burden of funding these services on people like me. The major institutions have much greater financial resources than people like me. Baltimore City's tax rate is substantially higher than neighboring counties, thanks in part to the mixed blessing of sharing our city with our prestigious medical and educational institutions.

Most Baltimore City residents are unaware of the fact that the major medical and educational institutions do pay a certain amount of money to the city in lieu of taxes. This sum falls short of the cost of the services they consume by a \$41 million annual shortfall. The last arrangement was negotiated a decade ago behind closed doors, to the disadvantage of the citizens of Baltimore.

We can all appreciate that the financial situation of Baltimore's universities, hospitals, and city budgets are under attack by a federal regime that is hostile to education, health and science, and Baltimore City itself. Now more than ever, the wellbeing of the institutions, the city, and its citizens are intertwined and interdependent, which requires all parties to the PILOT arrangement to be represented in the Task Force and ultimately in the negotiations. The taxpayers are citizens, not subjects, and need to have a voice in financial agreements that affect their taxes and quality of life.