

May 15, 2025

Toby Ditz
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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill # 25-0036
Property Taxes– Baltimore City Payment in Lieu of Taxes Task Force

TO: City Council President Zeke Cohen and Members of City Council

FROM: Toby Ditz

I'm Toby Ditz testifying in support of the Pilot Task Force bill.

I came to Baltimore to join the History faculty at Johns Hopkins University in 1982. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with so many wonderful students and colleagues, and I also am deeply distressed by President Trump's assault on our leading research institutions

But as a resident of Bolton Hill and Central West Baltimore for over 40 years, I also love this City. Long before the era of Trump, I was convinced that JHU has a moral obligation to face outward and work in partnership with the City

That is why I support a fair and transparent PILOT agreement in 2026. Yes, our nonprofit Universities and hospitals now face tremendous uncertainty and financial stress. But so does our city— as our looming budget deficit attests.

So I see no reason to water down our expectations. To the contrary. The \$6 million dollar annual sum currently paid by all 14 of our leading Eds and Meds *together* is a token sum— less than 15% of the cost of the city services they use every year and a tiny fraction of their annual operating budgets. Now more than ever “Town” and “Gown” need to work in partnership. Now more than ever, we should all pay our fair share.

A Task Force that would work out consistent principles for determining a solid, realistic agreement is a crucial first step. Our Comptroller has already done an important study of fair agreements in several of our sister cities in the Northeast: we know it can be done.

Now is the time to move forward—together. Let's pass this bill without weakening amendments.