



Testimony

Ordinance of Estimates for the Fiscal Year Ending June 20, 2026

To Council President Cohen and Members of the Baltimore City Council,

My name is Andre Johnson. I'm a homeowner, and my family has lived in Baltimore for generations. My grandmother was a nurse, my aunt is a retired school teacher, and my other aunt worked for juvenile services. My wife and I are both healthcare workers, and our daughter wants to become a nurse too. Public service runs deep for us.

Maryland has the longest Emergency Department wait times in the country because of short staffing. This impacts the whole care team at the hospital where I work, as well as City EMS workers like Firefighters. Hospital short staffing is not only hurting quality of care, it's affecting the City's budget and slowing down emergency response times. I'm extremely concerned about how the city's \$85 million budget shortfall will impact public employees and EMS.

Working people are already bearing the brunt of this shortfall through high property taxes and under-funded services. The city can't "fine and fee" its way out of this crisis. Everyday people don't have that kind of money. It's time for wealthy, tax-exempt hospitals and universities to pay their fair share for city services. They used \$47 million in city services, but only paid \$6 million in a PILOT agreement. That \$41 million gap accounts for almost half of the City budget deficit.

I urge the Council to vote YES on Bill 25-0036 to create a Taskforce to recommend a fair PILOT and a transparent process where labor and community has a voice. People are losing faith in Government right now. It's very disheartening to see the attacks on democracy on a federal level, and increases in fines and fees for working people on the local level. The PILOT Taskforce is an opportunity to do better here in Baltimore, close the budget gap, and build a city that's with us & for us. Thank you.

In Unity,

Andre Johnson, District 4