

Abigail Ulman

Testimony in **support** of Baltimore City Council Bill 25-0036, Baltimore City Payment in Lieu of Taxes Task Force

May 11, 2025

Baltimore, MD

Thank you, Councilmembers, for the opportunity to testify. My name is Abigail Ulman and I am a Baltimore City resident of Charles Village in District 14 and an alum of Johns Hopkins University. I am also a member of the With Us For Us coalition and a chapter leader with the Resource Generation Baltimore chapter. Resource Generation is a collective of young people between 18 to 35 with class privilege and/or wealth working toward the equitable redistribution of wealth, land, and power. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Resource Generation Baltimore chapter.

I am writing to testify in strong **support** of Baltimore City Council Bill 25-0036, Baltimore City Payment in Lieu of Taxes Task Force.

Baltimore has nearly one-fifth (20%) of all tax-exempt property in Maryland, and the city relies on property taxes for half its revenue. This means that the burden of financing public services falls primarily on residents and local businesses, instead of the institutions paying into the PILOT. However, these 14 institutions own an estimated \$5 billion+ worth of property which, if taxed, would bring the city about **\$120 million a year**. In contrast, Baltimore City's Department of Finance estimates that the 14 nonprofits in the current PILOT agreement use about **\$47.6 million worth of municipal services a year** after deducting community benefits and contributions they make to the City. By this calculation, these nonprofits underpay the city by \$41 million annually - \$47 million worth of services minus the \$6 million in PILOT payments. However, these 14 institutions could be providing the city with almost \$70 million in profit, if they paid their fair share. And Baltimore needs funding – this money could go to funding programs in public schools, paying teachers, road repair, housing upgrades, or fixing our sewage and water services – all investments that make our city safer, more prosperous, and more equal.

Baltimore City Council Bill 25-0036 will ensure that these institutions pay their fair share and redistribute their wealth to Baltimore communities – which aligns with the mission of Resource Generation. The task force will recommend a fair funding formula to be used for PILOT contributions that takes into consideration total property tax exemption, assets, and city service utilization for each institution. The task force will have representatives from low-income community members, union members, and the city council – instead of enabling deals between the institutions and the mayor behind closed doors. Lastly, the task force will hold meetings in public and be accountable to the community, ensuring Baltimore city members have a say in their deliberations and can publicly hold the institutions accountable. This will not only redistribute the vast wealth of these institutions back to the city and ensure these institutions contribute as much as they take in city services, but will also serve to repair the decades of harm these institutions have caused the city in gentrification, displacement, and overpolicing. Baltimore City Council Bill 25-0036 will overwhelmingly help the city and residents of Baltimore and contribute to community wealth-building. Therefore, I am strongly in **favor** of this bill.