

May 13, 2025

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL# 25-0036

Property Taxes – Baltimore City Payment in Lieu of Taxes Task Force

TO: Chair McCray, Vice Chair Schleifer, and Members of the Budget & Appropriations Committee

FROM: Kyle Long

My name is Kyle Long. I am a lifelong resident of Baltimore City, currently living in 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 clinical social worker working with families across Baltimore City and routinely see the need for increased services and support for families I work with and in communities across Baltimore. We should be doing all we can to generate revenue from organizations who can pay their fair share instead of placing the burden on the back of city residents.

I work for a community based social work service that provides case management, therapeutic support and financial assistance to families living in Baltimore City. The number one reason why families seek services at my agency is due to housing issues and support with back rent. It is no secret that there are at least 13,000 vacant houses in the city and that many families live in substandard housing. On top of that, rent is becoming increasingly unaffordable, with Baltimore City having one of the highest eviction rates in the country. For folks that do end up experiencing homelessness, they are lucky if they can even get a bed in a shelter or even reach someone to see if there are beds available.

I see day in and day out the effects of a broken housing system: people living in unsafe housing conditions and struggling to get the basic repairs fixed or pest issues addressed; people struggling to pay their rent

due to losing a job; people who struggle to find homes where their rent is truly affordable. Given that Mayor Scott has set forward ambitious housing plans to tackle vacants and provide relief to homeowners saddled with the highest property taxes in the state, the funds generated through a revised PILOT agreement would help to push those plans forward. Especially at a time when we are facing federal funding cuts, we need to do all that we can to generate revenue from those institutions that can afford to pay them and use that to invest in Baltimore City residents and communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this matter. It is crucial that we continue to find ways to fund and support the Mayor's ambitious plans to redress the housing situation in Baltimore City and make sure that our institutions that can afford to are paying their fair share to make that happen. It is for these reasons that **I respectfully urge this committee to pass Council Bill #25-0036 without any weakening amendments.**