Testimony for 21-0053R

Audrey Akumkperik – ACCE School Student

Good evening council members,

My name is Audrey Akumkperik and I am an 11th grader  at ACCE. As a Baltimore city school student, I felt something needed to change about school lunch, so I wrote a letter to Councilwoman Ramos last February and suggested a bill to allow students to voice their concerns and be able to influence their menu options. I think students should have a say in the type of food being served to them. After all, we are the ones eating it. Doing this will allow student preferences to be heard and they would be able to eat their desired food and feel happy about their lunch and therefore be more ready for their classes afterward. You could get the students' views and opinions by conducting surveys about menu preferences, including allergies and other dietary restrictions.

Students and their preferences are  too often ignored about things that directly affect and concern them. This decision should be one made by students or in partnership with students. This would be a great opportunity to have student lead, to represent other students’ preferences and acknowledge and listen to young people. We could hear students multiple ways by conducting surveys, electing student representatives from each school, gathering parent input, and perhaps focus groups with students, cafeteria staff and others. This change could be an opportunity for Baltimore City to be a place where students and their representatives work together and where the school food’s menu would not be decided solely by other people.

This is a chance to let students lead and to also  meet their needs and help them excel in school. This could be a chance to help students become responsible decision makers, particularly about their own health and eating habits. It could also help shape students to be responsible leaders and advocates. This is an opportunity we should not pass up. Thank you for your time and consideration.