

Yolanda Pulley
4502 Carleview Road
Baltimore, MD 21207
(443) 355-8014

August 27, 2020

Councilman Kristopher Bennett
100 Holliday Street
Suite 500
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: Internet Access for School Year Hearing

Dear Councilman Bennett,

My name is Yolanda Pulley and I am a constituent in your district. I am writing to you today to submit my testimony to the Education and Youth Committee hearing on internet access for the new school year. Currently my home is without adequate high speed internet service that could support my child Jordan Jones education via virtual learning. Since the Baltimore City School System has decided that the new school year will be conducted by virtual learning, without access to adequate high speed internet service my child's education is at jeopardy.

I have tried to obtain adequate high speed internet service through the main provider in Baltimore City (which is Comcast). But due to a previous billing discrepancy (a bill over \$1,200), I am unable to obtain adequate high speed internet service from Comcast for my child. Although my family currently qualifies for the Comcast Essentials internet service, Comcast is refusing to provide the Essentials service until what they consider to be my pass bill is paid in full. I have tried to work with Comcast in establishing a payment plan, but Comcast is refusing to provide "any" service until the full amount owed is paid. Even after spending many hours on the phone with Comcast customer service representatives and speaking with several supervisors, I am still left without access to adequate high speed internet service through Comcast.

Being on a fixed income I am unable to pay Comcast over \$1200 in order to obtain adequate high speed internet service. Plus, there are concerns that the billing is erroneous in the first place which I continue to dispute with their customer service department. Additionally, I have spoken to other families throughout Baltimore City who are dealing with this very same issue in obtaining adequate high speed internet service via Comcast due to past billing issues.

Some of these families have been dealing with this issue since the Covid-19 pandemic began. Large numbers of Baltimore City students were unable to attend the final months of the last school year due to the fact that they did not have access to adequate high speed internet service. Many families had to scramble to find ways for their children to participate with the Baltimore City School systems sudden move to virtual learning. Without laptops and access to adequate high speed internet service, many students felt a disappointment in their learning experience and were cut off from their right to a quality education.

In closing, I am asking for something to be done under these unprecedented times. If the students of Baltimore City school must attend virtual learning due to the pandemic, then the access to adequate high speed internet service must be made available to our children without any restrictions and/or reservations. Our children must have all the tools and resources necessary to ensure the survival of a quality education. That includes my own child Jodan Jones who is a freshman high school student in Baltimore City. I am asking the Education and Youth Committee to please consider using all legislative powers to ensure the access to adequate high speed internet service from Comcast that is essential for virtual learning this school semester. Our children should not be held accountable for a pandemic they didn't ask for. Thank you for your time and consideration in advance. Stay blessed and stay safe.

Sincerely,
Yolanda Pulley