

TESTIMONY OF LAURA REAMS IN FAVOR OF HB 348
UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE – SCHAEFER CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY - FUNDING

To: Chairman Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House of Delegates Appropriations Committee

I write to you in strong support of HB 348 to provide an annual appropriation of \$1,900,000 to support the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore. I am a current candidate for the Certified Public Manager Program and wish to share the positive experience I have had with the program and the impact the program has for the municipality where I am employed.

I began working for the City of Hyattsville in 2011. I came to local government from the private sector, taking on the role of City Clerk. While I was excited to start a career in public service, I did not know how meaningful and fulfilling I would find local government work to be for me. I began to seek out as many opportunities I could for training and while at a Maryland Municipal League Conference, I learned of the Certified Public Manager Program. I was immediately intrigued and wanted to pursue my CPM certification but at the time, I was unable to financially afford the program and my agency did not have the funds to cover the cost of the program. I continued to seek low or no cost training throughout my career and kept the CPM program in mind for the future. I was thrilled when I found out last year that scholarships were available for the CPM program, and I immediately applied for admission into the program.

I entered the CPM program in Fall of 2023 and am currently about 60% through the program. It has been an invaluable experience to date, and I have already seen positive impacts from the skills I have learned in the program both personally and for my municipality. The program provides comprehensive training on public management skills and requires the development of a capstone project intended to benefit the candidate's organization. My capstone project will support the implementation of participatory budgeting in Hyattsville, a priority identified by our City Council but one in which our current staffing did not have the expertise or capacity to implement. The CPM program has given me the skills to make this project a reality for our municipality and provided me with a strong network of teachers and colleagues to lean on to support the development of my capstone project.

I strongly believe that the municipalities of Maryland will greatly benefit from an annual appropriation to support the Schaefer Center for Public Policy's CPM and Next Gen Programs. It has become harder and harder for municipalities to recruit and retain the highly qualified leadership that our communities need. Funding in municipalities is often stretched thin with training and professional development often being the areas in which budget cuts are made. The scholarship program offered by the Schaefer Center is imperative to support the next generation of public sector leaders in the State of Maryland. I urge you to provide a favorable report for HB 348.

Thank you for your consideration,

Laura Reams