

Maryland House of Delegates
Ways and Means Committee
HB24

Good afternoon Delegates. My name is Liliana Norkaitis, and I am asking for your favorable report of HB24. Like tens of thousands of students in Maryland, I started playing an instrument in elementary school. I picked the cello which my mom was not fond of since it took up the entire back seat of the car. Over the last 8 years, I mastered my craft and not only picked up a new party trick, but I improved coordination, memory, cognitive thinking, confidence, and found a new way to use my time that bettered how I understand emotions.

In October, I finally decided to end my rental program and purchased my own cello. I sought out my price range without thinking about the sales tax and was astonished when my bill was an additional \$120 because of the tax. I do not come from a financially comfortable household, so this was a setback just to be able to continue doing what I love. Our school system has incorporated music into its curriculum, but it is inaccessible to a lot of families who cannot afford an additional \$100+ to cover the lump sum or the few dollars extra every month in a rental program. Music is an incredible thing that connects everyone and instills cultural awareness. The first step to ensuring more students continue with music through all their years of schooling is to eliminate the sales tax on the rental and purchases of musical instruments for Marylanders like me because every student deserves the accessibility to play an instrument without the burden of a financial setback.

Now thinking about logistics, many of my friends in music went out of state to buy their instrument to avoid the egregious tax. Passing HB24 will keep revenue in Maryland and allow our wonderful family-owned music shops to flourish while helping the students of our state.

I will have my instrument well after I am out of school, so I am not here today so that I, personally, can save \$120 on my next cello purchase. I am here for the thousands of students who cannot afford an instrument. I am asking for your favorable report of HB24 because a favorable report means progress unequal access to a skill that will keep kids out of dangerous activity and engaged in a magnificent craft. Let's reward the children of tomorrow by making music more accessible.