

Good afternoon. I am a resident of the city of Hyattsville, I support the bill with an amendment to discontinue 20% of state funds after the audit is more than one year late, rather than three years. According to my review of Hyattsville's audits, the last time the city completed an audit less than one year late was fiscal year 2008, when I was in middle school. If the city of Hyattsville cannot figure out how to complete audits in a timely manner in the time it took me to graduate high school, graduate college, get married, and have three children, I do not have much faith that letting them have three years without any penalty will improve matters.

Currently, Hyattsville is 2 years and 5 months late on their 2021 audit. The city did initially release those audited financial statements, only to later withdraw them from the city website. Year after year, Hyattsville's auditors have reported a material weakness in the city's internal controls, writing that "the City's ability to provide reliable interim financial reports is inhibited by current accounting practices." The city has lost its credit rating, but nothing has changed. Despite having outstanding general obligation debt that requires continuing disclosure of financial statements, the city has not posted 2022 or 2023 financials (audited or unaudited) to the Electronic Municipal Market Access system from the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board in compliance with their continuing disclosure agreement. In short, Hyattsville has many problems beyond its untimely audits, and allowing audits to be three years late before any action is taken only encourages them in their irresponsibility. It inhibits transparency and accountability.

If a problem is discovered two years later, how can it be fixed in a timely manner? Elected officials have turned over, more damage may have been done, and meanwhile

local governments are violating the law with impunity. The ability to timely and accurately file audited financials is a basic function of competent accounting professionals. If a local government can't even manage to do that, then withholding funds will hopefully inspire them to improve. In summary, please amend the bill to its original form and pass it favorably so that other aggrieved residents such as myself can finally know what our local governments are doing with our tax dollars.