

Testimony in Support of CB10-2026

Howard County Council – Public Hearing

Good evening Councilmembers,

My name is Amir Naviwala, and I'm a resident of Howard County and a candidate for County Council.

I'm here to support **CB10-2026**, because this bill addresses a long-standing structural problem in how we fund our public schools: **we repeatedly defer known maintenance needs even when surplus funds are available.**

Howard County currently faces a **deferred maintenance backlog of nearly \$200 million** in our school system. These are not hypothetical projects — they are roofs, HVAC systems, and building conditions that directly affect students' learning environments and teachers' working conditions. Every year we delay these projects, they become more expensive and more disruptive.

CB10-2026 takes a **measured and fiscally responsible approach**. It allows excess surplus funds — after our rainy-day fund requirements are fully met — to be used for deferred school maintenance in FY2028. This is exactly the kind of one-time capital expense that surplus funds are meant for. It avoids unnecessary borrowing, reduces long-term costs, and addresses real needs that have already been identified.

Importantly, this bill does **not** weaken fiscal safeguards. It does not touch the rainy-day fund, it does not affect operating budgets or maintenance-of-effort requirements, and it includes a **sunset provision**, ensuring this authority does not become automatic or permanent without future Council action.

At its core, this bill reflects a simple principle: **when the County has excess resources, schools should not be the last priority.** They should be among the first.

I urge the Council to support CB10-2026 and to treat deferred school maintenance as the liability that it is — not something we continue to push off to the next budget cycle.

Thank you for your time.
