

**TESTIMONY OF TODD J. COCHRAN**  
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My name is Todd Cochran, and I am a parent of two second graders and a PK4 child at Capitol Hill Montessori at Logan ("CHML"). In addition, I just began my second term as the vice president of our PTSO, I am a Ward 6 resident, and I testified before this Committee in April as well as at a joint hearing in June regarding the lead in the water issue. Thank you to Chairman Grosso and the rest of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

CHML had been slated for a much needed modernization in previous versions of the Capital Improvement Plan ("CIP") for 2014, then bumped back to 2017, and then pushed to 2019. We are reasonable, and we understand that -- just like our school -- many, many DCPS facilities have strong needs for modernization. But our community was stunned and upset when the Mayor released her FY17-22 CIP in March, and CHML had completely disappeared.

The Mayor's omission of CHML from the CIP means that CHML's modernization would not begin until 2023, at the absolute earliest. My kids, who would then be in eighth and fifth grades, would not receive much benefit at all from the process. Nor would hundreds of other kids at CHML because our school only goes up to eighth grade, and in the meantime, they would be attending school in a crowded, unsafe, hot, loud, building with poor air quality and rats, among myriad other problems.

So our PTSO leadership set about figuring out why we were omitted from the CIP, and we discovered that DGS had never actually assessed our school prior to the Mayor bumping and then recently omitting it from the CIP entirely. After much effort and many meetings with DCPS and DGS, the Deputy Mayor for Education and DGS finally admitted they never assessed CHML. Further, it is very possible we never would have discovered the lack of an assessment without the attention we generated when we discovered the lack of transparency and notification concerning the lead in the water issue.

The Mayor omitting CHML from the CIP without assessing our school so that it could be adequately, fairly, transparently, and objectively compared to other DCPS schools is frankly absurd. A doctor, for example, would not prescribe a patient medication or begin a surgery without first assessing and evaluating the patient's condition and needs. Similarly, a plumber

would not try to repair a sink without first diagnosing the problem. So, it stands to reason that omitting CHML from the CIP without first assessing our school defies logic, common sense, and basic fairness. Again, we know other schools have great needs, but so does CHML, and our children deserve a fair and objective opportunity to have their school's needs remedied. DGS finally began an assessment of CHML two weeks ago, but the significant damage of our school's removal from the current CIP cannot be undone.

CHML supports the PACE Act and Chairman Grosso's efforts on this bill, so that objective criteria -- and not politics -- influences which, how, and when schools are modernized. I urge the Committee to include provisions in the legislation to ensure that the unfortunate circumstances that prejudiced CHML do not happen again. DCPS and DGS need to be required to complete full assessments of each and every DCPS facility, held accountable for proving their compliance, and then provide the results to the school communities in a complete and transparent manner. Not only does CHML want its situation remedied, but we do not want any other school to be marginalized and neglected as we have been.

Thank you.