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Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Maharath, Members of the Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on H.B. 75.

I am Daniel L. Wilson, Chief Financial Officer of Mentor Public Schools. A primary focus of the Mentor Public Schools' participation in the real estate tax valuation process is to ensure that real property situated in its District is fairly valued. Our Board of Education believes establishing an accurate fair market value for real estate is necessary for a fair taxation system for every taxpayer in the community. Additionally, the Mentor Public Schools files increase complaints on commercial property to compensate for the loss of tax revenue those results from decrease complaint filings, and counter-complaints to protect existing revenue. We hope to offset the loss of tax revenue from commercial and residential property that is over-valued by the gain of tax revenue from commercial property that is under-valued. Our ability to manage local property taxes directly impacts our primary funding and the need to secure additional resources from the voters and the General Assembly.

The compromise reached just this past December in Sub H.B. 343 addressed the concerns of the proponents that the elected board of education is aware of and approved the filing of real estate tax valuation complaints. H.B. 75 is not the compromise Bill agreed to by the sponsor and Interested Parties, which was the result of months of consideration and discussion. Rather, H.B. 75 largely reverts to the original H. B. 343 language introduced in the House in 2017. We request that the Committee approve a Substitute H.B. 75 incorporating the compromises agreed to by all parties, including Rep. Merrin, and approved by the Senate Ways & Means Committee at the end of 2018.

We appreciate your consideration of our objections and look forward to working with interested parties, the sponsor, and the committee for additional discussions.

Thank you,

Daniel L. Wilson
Chief Financial Officer