



**Testimony to the Baltimore City Land Use and Taxation Committee
Ticket Agencies-Temporary Modification City Council Bill 13-0194
Position: Opposed**

February 14, 2013

Carl Stokes, Chair
Land Use and Taxation Committee
Baltimore City Council
100 Holiday Street,
Baltimore, MD 21202

Chair Stokes and Members of the Committee:

My name is Marceline White and I am a resident of Baltimore City, District 11 as well as Executive Director of the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition (MCRC). MCRC is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances fairness and justice for Maryland consumers through research, education, and advocacy.

MCRC is writing to express our concern regarding City Council Bill 13-0194. This bill would temporarily allow Ticketmaster to scalp tickets, despite the fact that Maryland's highest court -- the Court of Appeals -- recently found, in the case of *Bourgeois v. Live Nation, et. al.*, that charging service fees (or anything more than the established price of the ticket) violates Baltimore's long-standing scalping ordinances. Each violation of that law carries a \$1,000 penalty that the city could collect.

Bill 13-0194 would, in effect, block enforcement of the city's anti-scalping ordinance against Ticketmaster even as the same law continues to be enforced against Baltimore citizens.

In her State of the City address on Feb. 11, 2013, Mayor Rawlings-Blake discussed a \$750 million structural deficit facing the city. Given that the city stands to recoup significant revenue from Ticketmaster for its scalping violations, and badly needs new revenue, we find it troubling that this bill would force the city to forego an additional revenue stream. And it is disconcerting, to say the least, to see that under this bill the city would not collect revenue from Ticketmaster while it pursues speed camera fines and exorbitant water bills from citizens, even though some of the water meters haven't been read and many of the speed camera have proved inaccurate.

There should be one standard that both individuals and corporations are held to. Yet Bill 13-0194 would create a two-tiered system with fees and penalties for Baltimore residents and a free pass for Ticketmaster.

MCRC opposes City Council Bill 13-0194 and urges an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

Marceline White
Executive Director