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***U.S. Senate Budget Committee Field Hearing
PerformanceStat: Measuring Priorities Progress and Results
Written Testimony of Christopher Thomaskutty, Deputy Mayor of Baltimore City***

I. Introduction

Mr. Chairman and honorable members of the committee, thank you for the honor of representing Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Baltimore City at this incredibly important hearing. I consider myself fortunate to have a Governor who actually understands management and governance at both the local and state level. In 2003, then Mayor Martin O'Malley hired me as a CitiStat Analyst, and I have watched his visionary idea of CitiStat form a solid foundation for three different mayoral administrations.

You have heard expert testimony and specific examples from Governor O'Malley and County Executive Leggett on the transformative power of PerformanceStat in Maryland and in Montgomery County. I will spend my time with you on some less visible, but equally important, features of our CitiStat strategy. In particular, I want to focus on the following:

- CitiStat's role in ensuring smooth transitions of power,
- the evolution and maturation of the CitiStat strategy,
- the application of PerformanceStat to the federal government.

II. Role of CitiStat in Mayoral Transitions--Flattening the Learning Curve

CitiStat has thrived for ten years under different leadership styles because the strategy is a perfect fit for Baltimore City government. An unanticipated benefit of CitiStat is that it has eased the transition for the last two mayors. Mayor Rawlings-Blake needed only weeks to immerse herself in the policy issues and operations of her major agencies. Our Chief Executive receives detailed analytical memos on each agency that help her quickly



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identify the strengths and weaknesses of her departments as well as the frustrations associated with our rule obsessed bureaucracy. During CitiStat meetings, the Mayor has the ability to directly instill her beliefs, priorities, and expectations to department heads and middle managers without a filter. Whether thru direct conversation or via one-page follow-up memos, City managers and staff leave each meeting with a clear sense of the Mayor’s priorities and expectations. This ability to “turn the ship” quickly has proved invaluable to Mayor Rawlings-Blake as we have continued a historic homicide reduction, managed thru a \$121 million budget deficit, and passed sweeping ethics reform and pension reform legislation during her first few months in office.

III. Evolution and Maturation of CitiStat

The four tenets of CitiStat—accurate and timely information shared by all, rapid deployment of resources, effective tactics and strategies, and relentless follow-up and assessment—should always serve as the cornerstone of our strategy. However, every successful management strategy evolves and adapts to its environment. The evolution of CitiStat is most clearly seen in (1) our adaptation of a collaborative meeting model focused on specific policy areas, and (2) the incorporation of Outcome-Based Budgeting into our management strategy.

- **Multi-Agency Meetings Based on Shared Goals, not Direct Authority.** Most of our traditional meetings are focused on the operations of a single agency or department (and that’s the way it should be for other cities initiating a CitiStat strategy). CitiStat promotes accountability, and we have never been shy about expecting a lot from our department heads. However, few complex public problems can be confined to a single agency within a large bureaucracy. And in Baltimore, our most difficult policy issues, require better coordination among local, state, and federal governments as well as our private and non-profit partners. Within the City government, we host Clean Stat, which is a collection of agencies focused on metrics and strategies to keep Baltimore clean. A recent conversion to a new collection model has allowed Baltimore City to save over \$7 million a year while increasing our recycling tonnage by 53 percent—thus, achieving government’s Holy Grail by simultaneously cutting costs while improving citizen services. We expect to collect our 50,000,000th pound of recycling under our “One Plus One” collection plan later this month.



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Gun Stat is perhaps the best example of this collaborative approach to CitiStat. Through GunStat, local, state and federal law enforcement and prosecution agencies come together once a month to share information about felony gun cases and defendants. Before each meeting, agencies submit reports that include a wide range of data about each of the pending cases and provide information about current performance. The purpose of GunStat is to ensure that felony gun cases and defendants are prioritized by all law enforcement, prosecution and community supervision agencies and that all agencies involved are taking necessary steps to bring solid cases to trial.

GunStat tracks all felony gun cases excluding homicides. We collect specific information on each defendant and track each case through its final disposition. Data collected by GunStat includes: the gun offense, amount of bail set, whether the defendant is detained or released on bail, prior arrest and conviction history, parole and probation status, case disposition and sentencing. In addition, GunStat tracks the location of gun seized and is used to help prioritize cases for our Gun Trace Task Force.

GunStat provides real time information about felony gun cases as they progress through the criminal justice system. Through GunStat, law enforcement, prosecution and community supervision agencies are more accountable and the City is able to provide real time information about bail and sentencing determinations in these cases.

- **Formalizing the Link between Performance Management and Budgeting.** CitiStat has always paid attention to the bottom line. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been saved as a result of better fiscal management, eliminating waste, reducing overtime, etc. However, until this past year, we had never fully integrated our budgeting process into our performance management infrastructure. Though informed greatly by lessons learned during a year's worth of CitiStat meetings, we always created the next year's budget by starting with the previous year's spending levels. Once programs were funded, it often took a crisis or exceptionally poor performance to remove those funds from the budget. Our new budgeting process, Outcome Based Budgeting, aligns resources with results. It is a natural extension of CitiStat because it focuses the allocation of scarce resources on services and programs that provide the most impact per dollar spent (i.e., value). In an era of austerity, Outcome Budgeting provides a clearer way to see the true impact of budget reductions on performance and service delivery. As opposed to relying on across the board cuts, we have built an infrastructure that enables us to fund the Mayor's



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priorities and justify the de-funding of low priority or low performing programs. This transition has not been painless, and it is true that traditional CitiStat metrics trend toward output measures, not outcome measures. Nonetheless, we have discovered that one can maintain a laser like focus on daily operational metrics and still set aside time to step back and review outcome measures that may only mature on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis.

III. Potential Application for Federal Government and Beyond

The four tenets of CitiStat have been proven to work in cities, counties and states across our country. While I am neither a management professor nor a federal government expert, I do know how to use data to make government run better, faster and cheaper. I am convinced that the CitiStat strategy can be adapted to improve service delivery, policy development, and accountability within the federal government sector. People in this room and Stat converts throughout this country are willing to help figure it out. The opportunity is perhaps most easily applied to any program, division, or department that is involved in citizen service delivery. However, our collaborative model and links to outcome budgeting suggest that even federal agencies that are not direct service providers can utilize our intensive Stat meeting model.