

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code

[Insert Date]

The Honorable [insert full name]
City County Building
Suite 510/Floor 5
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Council[man or woman] [insert last name]:

As a [student|staff member|faculty member] at Carnegie Mellon University, I am firmly opposed to the one percent tax on our tuition that Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl has proposed to raise additional revenue for the City. [Please add one or two sentences personalizing the main message].

I adamantly object to the Mayor's opinion that students are not contributing fairly or sufficiently to the city of Pittsburgh. College students are fundamental contributors to the city's economy through their patronage of local businesses. Many students pay property taxes either directly through homeownership or indirectly through rent. Additionally, college students contribute hundreds of thousands of community service hours each year to the benefit of the city. Our universities themselves also provide police and security services as well as health and human services.

We are all sympathetic to the city's budget concerns, but the reality is that most students are not all in the financial position that Mayor Ravenstahl assumes. Many students are employed in work-study programs, and the vast majority of Carnegie Mellon students receive financial aid. While outside scholarships have helped to offset rises in tuition, these scholarships would not pay additional taxes, too. Furthermore, students at Carnegie Mellon should not pay more than students at other colleges for the same services – it is not the case that because the institution is more expensive, wealthier students attend classes there.

I believe that this tax on education will prove detrimental to the city of Pittsburgh in many ways. The proposed tuition tax will diminish the purchasing power of students, dissuade new students from attending college in Pittsburgh, harm the city's credibility as a progressive city, and discourage current students from remaining in the city upon graduation.

Please vote against this unfair and burdensome tax. Students and universities are already contributing a great deal to the city of Pittsburgh. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
[sign name here]