

Montgomery County Council
Stella Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Proposed Property Tax Increase

Dear Respected Members of the Council,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed property tax increase currently under consideration. While we fully support funding our public schools, raising property taxes on county residents is not the way to accomplish this. In fact, no other county in the region, or the District of Columbia, is raising property taxes – even as they all significantly increase school funding.

Furthermore, there is already additional funding available to our public schools by identifying overspending in the County portion of the budget. The proposed budget includes \$330 million in additional County spending and adds 1,300 new positions over three years, despite having over 1,500 current vacant jobs.

In addition, this budget prioritizes certain budget increases over our schools. Over the next two years, many County departments will receive large budget increases, in many cases at a higher percentage than schools. Before asking County taxpayers to foot a \$223 million dollar property tax bill, we should be looking at every possible avenue to fund our schools without raising property taxes.

Beyond the matter of funding our schools, this budget also sets a dangerous precedent for future budget pressures and future tax hikes. All of this spending creates a \$145 million structural deficit next year – even with this proposed massive property tax hike. This budget also hides a “budget bomb” which will cost \$100 million more next year – **creating pressure for future tax hikes.**

Your decision to raise property taxes comes as the County faces unprecedented headwinds with a declining population, stagnant job growth, and a declining commercial property tax base. Adding to this issue is the looming triple-layered tax increase that includes the proposed real estate tax increase, the proposed recordation tax increase, and the historic impact tax increase. We must grow our tax base and not follow the tax spiral that will further erode the County’s ability to fund the programs we cherish.

Now is not the time for a property tax hike. We urge the Council to pass a fiscally sound budget that grows funding for our schools without a property tax increase.

Sincerely,



