

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	NON-BUDGET	<p>As a FCPS parent, I am concerned about the lost learning we have had in school since the beginning of January. Has a request to move back the SOL dates been made to the state? Our children are being forced to cram extra information in to make up for the missed days. Adding 2 days to the school year in June, does not help learning at all. It seems to me to be a “check the box” kind of exercise. There is no value added in having those additional days of school as no learning will be taking place.</p> <p>I don’t understand why FCPS does not do what Loudon County schools do. They start the same day we do. Their last scheduled day is June 13<sup>th</sup>. Even with more snow days than we had, they still will finish on time, more than 10 days before FCPS. They have a slightly longer school day, and it accommodates up to 18 snow days. With the increase in student homework/planning/help periods during the week, the extra time in the day could be used for that instead of taking away instructional time. This year my 8<sup>th</sup> grader now has 3 days a week of “focus time” which is right after 2<sup>nd</sup> period. Theoretically they can use this time to do homework (some kids do, mine has no homework by then or she needs a computer), meet with teachers, etc. From the feedback I get from my child, they read a book or have social time depending on whose classroom they are in. The idea makes sense, but I would rather have my child receive that time in instruction. She does her homework at home.</p> <p>Has any thought been put into this model to help shorten our school year (since starting before Labor Day apparently is a non-starter) and essentially eliminate extending the school year? If we have no snow days, worst case is our children have the opportunity to learn more. It can’t be an issue with buses, because extending everyone’s school day the same amount means using the same number of buses.</p>	3-12-14

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2	<b>SCHOOLS: INCREASE GENERAL FUND TRANSFER</b>	<p>As a parent with one child in Kindergarten and one still in pre-school, I am concerned that the years of neglect to the Fairfax school budget are taking a toll. Our schools continue to slide in national rankings, and Falls Church High where my child will be going under the current zoning is one of the worst schools in Virginia.</p> <p>The population of Fairfax County continues to grow. The dollar spent per student has to not only stay constant, but at a minimum keep pace with inflation. If our school systems continue to decline I will look to leave the community I love to give my children the opportunity to go to a school that can fully develop their talents.</p>	2-27-14
3	<b>SCHOOLS: INCREASE GENERAL FUND TRANSFER</b>	<p>In response to the FY 2015 Advertised Budget Plan, I appreciate that you are making town hall meetings available, but am concerned that if a higher tax rate is not advertised on March 4th that the discussions will already have been limited. I am a homeowner, mother of four students attending FCPS schools, and PTA President of one of them. I have grave concerns about the quality of education FCPS can offer with limited resources while neighboring counties continue to pay their teachers more. With increased enrollment and retirement payments due for FCPS retirees, programs will suffer in our schools which will lead to lower property values. I am in full support of increasing the school transfer to 5.7% to fully fund our schools.</p>	2-25-14

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4	<p><b>SCHOOLS:</b></p> <p><b>INCREASE</b></p> <p><b>GENERAL FUND</b></p> <p><b>TRANSFER</b></p>	<p>I am a Fairfax County Public School parent. I am very concerned about the proposed FY 2015 budget for our public schools. One of the reasons we live in Fairfax County is the excellent public school system, and so far, we have not been disappointed. Our family has benefited from living in a community where the public schools are not just acceptable but nationally known. The full transfer requested by the FCPS School Board is essential to protect classroom and student programming in order to maintain the excellent level of education found within FCPS and to give our students the tools needed to succeed in the 21st century.</p> <p>I am not convinced that the Fairfax County Public School system can continue to enjoy its national reputation for excellence if the proposed budget cuts take effect. Families with the means to do so will choose other school districts where other budgetary choices have been made - an option that has never seemed necessary for many families, but may seem so in the near future. Teachers will seek employment in other school districts where they can receive better salaries and benefits. All of the programs and staffing at risk are a part of what makes FCPS nationally competitive. If the quality of the FCPS system declines, Fairfax County will become less attractive to companies seeking to locate within the county or to continue their tenure here. There will be a tremendous ripple effect felt in all aspects of the services provided by the county. The FCPS School Board has utilized a measured approach in drafting its FY2015 budget. The budget includes means for reducing the central support budget. There would be increased income from student fees. The budget also includes funding for uncontrollable costs, such as retirement rates, and enrollment and demographics. If the county transfer to FCPS is not at the requested level, more drastic changes to our public schools will be necessary and the entire county loses. Parents of FCPS students take these budget issues very seriously. Difficult financial decisions must be made, but please do not make them at the expense of our children. Take the necessary actions to protect the future of Fairfax County, protect the funding for public education. Approve the full requested transfer.</p>	2-26-14

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5	<p><b>SCHOOLS:</b></p> <p><b>INCREASE GENERAL FUND TRANSFER</b></p>	<p>As a concerned parent and resident of Fairfax County, I feel it is very important to express my concerns about the budget and lack of funding for the school system. Prior to moving to Fairfax in 2012, I researched the class size, ratings, diversity, safety &amp; security, and programs available for students. After comparing surrounding counties, schools and communities, I made the decision to place my children in Westfield High School. I figured I would rent for a year or two until I found a home that we wanted. Since being in Fairfax County, I have noticed that things aren't as wonderful as I had expected or read (Westfield is great). Now, I am reading and learning about some negative changes that will take place within the school system. I moved to Fairfax for the school system. Worst of all, when I talk to other parents and friends, I am learning that a lot of them are looking into private schools or making plans to move out of the county within the next two or three years. As a result, I have some major reservations about purchasing a home in Fairfax County.</p> <p>Have you thought about why Fairfax is considered one of the best places to live (according to Sperling's Best Places, Relocateamerica.com, and Money.CNN.com)? Some might say it is because of the businesses, beautiful libraries, amazing recreation centers, or the distance to D.C. Well, the truth is ALL of those reasons are impacted by some major questions– How is the school system? What are the class sizes? What is the graduation rate? What are the qualifications of the teachers? Is the school properly preparing the students to compete with children from around the country or world? Will families want their kids in the school system? How is the crime rate? Will people be afraid to let their kids play in the front or backyard? Are people able to walk down the street safely? Are there kids roaming the streets and causing problems for people or businesses? Most of all, will Fairfax County still be desirable in five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years? As you prepare to make your decision about the budget or if you should really stand for the future of the reputation of Fairfax County (which depends on the reputation of Fairfax County Public Schools), please remember the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="573 1276 1829 1349">1. A great (not good) school system brings businesses and families who care and want a safe place to live.</li> <li data-bbox="573 1393 1829 1427">2. Older people, empty nesters, and singles do not want to live near poor or underperforming</li> </ol>	2-28-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>schools with kids roaming the streets or vandalizing their property.</p> <p>3. Families that come for employment care about the schools their child (ren) will attend and who will teach their child (ren).</p> <p>4. You cannot have a great school system without great teachers. Great teachers have families, bills, and lives. They may love their job, but need to be properly compensated. Check out the teacher and administrative pay scales of your neighboring counties (Arlington, Alexandria, D.C., Montgomery, and Howard) and yes, people will commute for the right pay.</p> <p>5. The decisions you make now WILL either positively or NEGATIVELY impact the future of Fairfax County. When your term expires and you look at the impact you have had on Fairfax County, will you be the ones to bring down Fairfax County? It ALL starts with the question, “How are the schools in Fairfax County?”</p> <p>As a concerned parent and educator, it is my hope and prayer that you will seriously consider how your decisions will have an everlasting impact on Fairfax County. Schools will make or BREAK a city, county, or area. If the residents are to pay more taxes, our schools should reflect the wealth and willingness of the families. I came because of the school system and hope the future plans of the school system will be desirable enough to keep me and the thousands that are planning to come. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and for your service to the county.</p>	

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6	RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE	The education of our young people is extremely important. If needed, raise the real estate taxes to ensure that our schools our properly funded.	3-31-14
7	RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE	<p>I believe it is fact that Fairfax County is already not keeping obligations and is redistributing money from the county workers who reside in the county and are trying to be a part of the solution, to those residents who simply take resources from it.</p> <p>Years of experience used to be placed next to steps on the FCPS salary schedule. Most of us didn't know when we took the job that it was even possible for you to take this away from us, as we accepted entry level salaries far below what we could make in the private sector at that time, but were told about the "security" of county government jobs with small increments in pay each year. Nobody could predict how bad things have become for us.</p> <p>At this time, us self-reliant government workers who live in the county are being asked to continue to invest the most by not only paying more in taxes but seeing our salaries continue to stagnate missed step after missed step, while still feeling the hurt of the extra 2% expired reduction to an employee's share of Social Security payroll taxes thanks to the federal governments issues. Yet the county continues to invest in people who reside in Fairfax who are not self-reliant at the double expense of their own workers who live in the county. Not enough attention is given to the amount of resources, both cash and human capital, that are used in "investing" in people who are not self-reliant. What I see in FCPS every day is the hidden costs of "keeping people out of poverty".</p> <p>Certain residents wake up in Reduced subsidized housing. They drive their children to SACC for a reduced rate for low incomes. Their children eat free and reduced breakfast (27 percent of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch). The extra homeroom teachers must be employed by FCPS. The extra ESOL and Special Ed teachers must also be employed to help service these children (16% of students don't speak English as their first language). Then there is the extra technology needed to test every student online.</p> <p>Yet more and more we see teachers and other county employees who reside in the county under attack as they have to move further out to pay for their housing, they can't afford to send their</p>	2-27-14

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		<p>children to SACC, their children don't get a free or reduced breakfast. For example, teachers are being forced to find more affordable homes in PW county and tutor for several hours after work while money is frivolously spent on helping those that only take from our county. Thus, the county is punishing hard working county employees who reside in the county more at the literal expense of others who only reside and take service from the county.</p> <p>The county needs to place its own workers, police officers, firefighters, teachers, librarians, and park employees who reside in the county at the same priority level as those who are simply taking from the county government, not below them. We literally can't afford to continue to incentivize not working and not making money at the expense of the county workers and the county taxpayers anymore. The county can't afford to spend money on more polling locations as to not inconvenience county voters on one day, at the literal expense of the taxpayer, and while denying the county worker their steps. The county can't afford to not reduce \$225,000 of its short term financial assistance to roughly 100 people (roughly \$2,250 for each as noted in #73 of the supervisors' memo of reductions not taken last year) by placing those people at a higher priority than the county taxpayer and the county worker who they deny \$1,100 step increases to. Fairfax County can't afford to not reduce \$585,910 of its general relief program by placing roughly 1,057 people (roughly \$ 554 for each person not counting the human capital resources used in #64 of the supervisors memo reductions not taken) at a higher priority than the county taxpayer and the county worker who they continue to deny \$1,100 step increases to. Fairfax County can't continue to not reduce over 1 million dollars by placing 360 individuals in adult day health care above by placing those people above the taxpayer and county workers who reside in the county that are being asked to dually sacrifice with lost wages and more taxes and higher costs. We need to seriously look at cutting costs by lowering the threshold of assistance in SACC, as well as free and reduced lunch. The county is all but financially bankrupt, please don't continue to be morally bankrupt by continuing to take more from us in taxes and denying us pay increases listed on our pay scales and redistributing it to others. I want more neighbors like that are teachers, librarians, and county employees!</p> <p>Fairfax County has repeatedly pit FCPS employees against other county employees and then pit</p>	

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		<p>those two groups against the taxpayer. A perfect game of divide and conquer that allows the county to deny paying teachers and other county employees their steps in order to subsidize benefits to people who are draining the system and are not part of the solution. The county budget is like a three leg stool. One leg is the tax payer, another leg is the county workers who strive everyday to make this county better, and the third leg is the services offered. This year we are all a witness to yet another perfect storm of problems arising, but we need to be realistic and cut more services if we are asking our tax payers to pay more and our county workers to once again forego the steps that will increase their pay by roughly \$1,100 per year. We need to focus less on compassion and more on fairness. We need to raise taxes by 3 cents AND take many more cuts if the county ever hopes to fulfill its commitment to opening the new fire station, keeping libraries and parks open, And FULLY FUND ITS SCHOOLS with the proper number of employees, and keeping our neighborhoods filled with hard-working county employees. I ask that you do everything in your power to make the maximum school transfer amount possible. PLEASE ADVERTISE and pass a 3 cent Advertised Tax Rate and pass it in the final budget to fully fund the schools!</p>	
8	<b>RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>After reviewing facts, several BOS decisions seem prudent, as it considers tax rates. FCPS plans to: (i) reduce employee positions, (ii) increase average class sizes in view of a 1.8 percent increase in enrollment and (iii) receive from BOS for FY 2015 an added transfer of \$98.1 million. But if BOS transfers funds according to its budget implies a FCPS budget shortfall of \$59 million. FCPS is obligated to fund EFRC obligations (\$631 million in 2012). FCPS is not closing this gap. Net outstanding obligations for County employee pensions was over \$1.2 billion in 2012. A payoff over 20 years entails annual outlays of over \$80 million. The Fairfax County bond rating may be downgraded due to its unfunded liabilities in view of no planned cuts in benefits.</p> <p>Large underfunding of benefits for County employees (by \$22 million for FY 2014 on pensions alone) as well as for FCPS employees is irresponsible. Such large entitlements are not consistent with current County bond ratings or ongoing post-employee benefits. The FCPS has not adopted best policies fostering for its funding, e.g.: (i) FCPS rejected an independent audit function for the School Board, (ii) it resists external assessment of educational performance, and (iii) it has not set moderate class sizes ceilings such as 32 for grades K-6. Thus, BOS should raise housing tax rates to</p>	3-19-14



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		<p>\$1.105 per \$100 of values, and allocate, from the resulting additional funds (\$43.8 million over that in the County Budget Plan): (i) \$21.9 million to slow growing outstanding County post-employment obligations, (ii) from \$13.9 to \$21.9 million to slow growing unfunded obligations for FCPS post-employment obligations, and (iii) up to \$8 million to FCPS if it authorized an independent audit function for the School Board, an external assessment of its educational performance, and K-6 class size ceilings of 32.</p> <p>Your support for such BOS decisions and comments would be appreciated.</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p><b>RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b></p>	<p>I'm writing to encourage you to set a higher property tax rate at the board meeting on Tuesday and / or seek additional sources of tax revenue (such as a meals tax). Simply put, the county's revenues are insufficient for everything it needs to do and -- as someone who will be paying those higher taxes -- I am asking you to raise them.</p> <p>I'm new to the county budget process, but as I understand it, the tax rate you "advertise" at your meeting on Tuesday sets the upper limit for the rest of the debate. Especially considering that your town hall discussions -- not to mention the board's public hearings -- will be after your meeting on the 4th, it seems like advertising a higher rate would give the process more flexibility -- otherwise, the debate seems to be about whether to fund less of the things that make Fairfax County attractive in the first place, and not whether we as a county are willing to pay the actual costs of the services we want.</p> <p>I am most concerned about funding the public school system, although I have concerns that a diet of barely adequate taxes will hurt the county -- and its full range of programs -- over the medium term. To use my household as an example, our assessment went up 16.6% from last year to this year, which works out to an additional \$967.82 in property taxes. And I'm happy to pay it because I recognize that this is what funds the services and amenities that make the county an attractive place to live. Adding three cents to the tax rate (which the county executive said is what it would take to fully fund the school board's request) would add another \$185 on top of that (which works out to fifty cents per day). That is certainly a reasonable price to pay in my view.</p> <p>A separate idea, which I had honestly not considered before I read it in the county executive's</p>	<p>3-02-14</p>

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		<p>online chat, is a meal tax. He asserted that a 4% tax would generate \$88 million, which (combined with potential state money) would be sufficient to close the school board's request with additional revenue. The last referendum on this was 1992, so perhaps it's time to look at it again.</p> <p>That additional revenue is important beyond this year because of the medium term risk I see in Moody's downgrading the outlook for the county's credit rating. The issues Moody's raised -- declining reserves and future pension obligations -- won't get better without additional money, either from cutting spending on current budget items or additional revenue. I don't believe that cutting spending is the answer because the things the county spends money on now -- schools, parks, police, etc. -- are the things that make life here enjoyable. Simply put, they are worth spending money on. That leaves raising additional money. I will admit that I have concerns, Mr. Cook, that you're not open to considering additional revenue, based on your comments in the Post and online. I don't know if that's a reflexive anti-tax sentiment or if you have concluded that the current tax rates are right. If it's the latter, I'd be interested in your argument. The obvious one is that higher taxes chase away business and residents, but I don't know that I've ever seen actual data that supports that assertion. . . and good analysis (and governing?) requires actual data. There is, of course, the long term question -- are we forever bound to pay more for schools? This year's school budget, for example, cuts a number of things (including people) to get "down" to the request they have submitted for more money. That is, however, what economics predicts: the answer is yes -- education costs go up faster than inflation, and always will.</p> <p>William Baumol, from New York University, is somewhat famous for naming this phenomenon the "cost disease." The example most often cited here is that it takes just as many musicians just as long to play a Beethoven symphony today as it did a hundred years ago -- i.e. there are no productivity gains to be had -- but it applies equally well to education. Essentially there is a limit to how efficient you can make education, and arguably it works best when it is least efficient -- when the teachers and staff have the excess capacity to spend the time a child with problems requires. In an industry -- like education -- where human work is what makes the endeavor valuable, cutting labor (the only way to cut costs) is ultimately self-defeating.</p> <p>Dr. Baumol published a fascinating book last year that I would recommend to you as something</p>	

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		<p>that could help inform your public policy work. His conclusion is that even though costs in this kind of industry will grow to striking levels, they ultimately remain affordable because the overall economy grows while the costs of other goods and services become cheaper (industries that can reduce costs through increased productivity). So essentially there is more money left over for everything else, even after some eye-popping education spending. The county and its residents can ultimately afford the ever increasing costs of a world-class school system.</p> <p>So, to reiterate, I am asking for three things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not lock the budge process into the current tax rate for the discussion that will come over the next month or so; advertise a higher tax rate, one sufficient to meet the school board's request;</li> <li>• actually increase tax revenue, preferably through increasing the property tax rate;</li> <li>• start the referendum process to put the question of additional tax sources to the voters (e.g., a meals tax).</li> </ul>	
10	<p><b>RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE AND ENDORSE MEALS TAX</b></p>	<p>I fully support an increase in the real estate tax as well as the meals tax for Fairfax County because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We need to fully fund our schools. We are N OT North Carolina. We should not participate in the ‘Race to The Bottom’ we see across the country promoted by the GOP</li> <li>2. We need to fund the safety net that more and more citizens in Fairfax County rely on. Family Services has such a backlog of applications and renewals for SNAP and other desperately needed services that are they are behind in processing them. People will go hungry because of this backlog!!! The strain this is putting on charitable organizations is becoming greater and greater.</li> </ol> <p>As a member of the Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) I am greatly concerned about the viability of our police force and what will happen without the new meals tax and without a real estate tax increase.</p>	3-30-14

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		<p>85% of our officers have college degrees hence they are a target for other recruiters (e.g., from federal agencies). Without pay equity we will continue to lose qualified and loyal officers to other agencies and jurisdictions.</p> <p>Officers have no option other than to put in overtime hours, maybe grab an hour or two of sleep, then have to appear in court. Morale is low and the police force is exhausted. The safety of our county is at stake.</p> <p>I strongly urge you and the Board of Supervisors to vote for an increase in the real estate tax and implement a meals tax for Fairfax County.</p> <p>I do not agree with the leadership of the CAC as they state that prior budget increase dollars have been ‘siphoned off’ to more social spending and even more money to the schools”. We all know or should know that without the investment in social programs and education the job of the police becomes harder as more citizens resort to acts of desperation just to keep a roof over their heads and feed themselves. I will not enter into discussion with the CAC leadership on this because as Rep Barney Frank stated at a Town Hall Meeting in Massachusetts it would be like , “talking to a table’.</p>	
11	<p><b>RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE AND ENDORSE MEALS TAX</b></p>	<p>Thank for you for the opportunity to provide input on the county budget. My first priority for application of increased tax revenue is to support our <b>Fairfax County Public Schools</b>. The budget for the FCPS is in dire need of support, and with the majority of the school’s funding coming from the county, I am a strong proponent of the county setting the tax rate to properly support the schools. I am also in favor of a Fairfax County meals tax to help generate revenue, provide funding flexibility at the county level going forward and to use them revenue to properly fund the FCPS budgetary needs. It is paramount for me and my family that our schools remain (or return to) the best in class status for which we have been recognized.</p>	3-28-14

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12	<b>ENDORSE MEALS TAX</b>	<p>The latest issue of your e- newsletter arrived just as my husband and I got home from having lunch at the Reston Town Center today. As usual, the restaurants were full of people having lunch, most of them probably workers from both the RTC and the surrounding area. Having spent some time looking at the proposed Fairfax County budget during the past several months, I have been thinking about the possibility and need for a meals tax for the County. So I thought about it when I saw all of the people that the RTC attracts. It occurred to me that the restaurants in Fairfax have little or no competition from restaurants in the surrounding areas that do not currently have a meals tax – Loudoun and Prince William counties. This is not likely to change with introduction of a meals tax in Fairfax County. There are actually few popular restaurants in the geographical area of those counties close to Fairfax employment centers that would attract most persons looking for restaurant meals or entertainment. You need only to look at a map of the area to see what I mean. Things have changed since the 1990s!</p> <p>As far as fast food restaurants are concerned, people will eat at the one closest to their house or route; they are not going to drive to Prince William or Loudoun County to eat at a fast food restaurant unless they are driving their children to a soccer game or something like that and it is on the way.</p> <p>Not one person I have spoken with has known how much tax they have paid on their meals – and whether it is the regular sales tax or a meals tax.</p>	4-10-14
13	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>After studying the budget this year, I want to affirm my belief that the tax rate should not be increased. Residents like myself saw our incomes rise less than 2% in 2013. We will have a tax increase based solely on our increased real estate assessments. I will realize that value increase only when I sell my home. In the meantime, I pay my taxes from current income. Please keep the same rate and consider reducing the rate in the future, if home values continue to rise.</p> <p>As a county employee, I am dedicated to providing excellent public service. It concerns me to see that teachers and administrators are recommended to receive a 2.1% pay increase in FY2015 while uniformed public safety are recommended for varying increases of about 3%. Why are regular county employees treated differently with only a recommended 1.2% increase? As I am getting</p>	4-04-14

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		<p>close to retirement, I will feel the effects forever in my retirement pay. I can never recoup the years of no raises or minimal raises. County employees for the most part do an excellent job and we are deserving of at least a 2% pay increase in FY2015.</p> <p>While we should not pit the FCPS against other county programs, I must state that it seems unreasonable for the schools to prepare a budget that was so totally not in accordance with the budget guidance given. I think the FCPS should be provided what the county can afford to provide—which is 2% in FY2015. There are many other needs in county programs for our aging population that need more focus and funding. The aging population does not have advocates like the schools to state their requirements and pressure for funding. Please hold the FCPS to a 2% increase.</p> <p>Please keep my comments in mind as you consider the FY2015 budget. Thanks for your consideration.</p>	
14	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>As retired residents of Fairfax County we have seen our assessment rise significantly this year and if you ALSO raise the tax rate to \$1.105 it will represent a very large increase in cost to us and thus it will be even more difficult for retired persons to live in the County.</p> <p>You MUST recognize that this is getting out of hand and hold the line on a real estate tax increase.</p>	3-31-14
15	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	The Tax rate is too high and I am opposed to ANY increase.	3-31-14

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16	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>Balance the FY 2015 Budget without increasing property tax rate. If this means limiting the schools to a two percent increase then it must be done until commercial tax revenue increases or another source of revenue is found, and no new initiatives should be undertaken until commercial revenues increase, another source of revenue is identified, or the budget is cut to allow for funding.</p> <p>Residential property assessments have increased a total of ten percent in the past two years (FY 2014 and FY 2015). At 63.2% the residential real estate tax payers are contributing enough of the County's revenue and are being priced out of their homes, especially those on a fixed income.</p>	4-7-14
17	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>Minimize Fairfax County Real Estate Tax Rate Increase Per the County Real Estate Division's real estate assessment notifications, 88% of residences in Fairfax County have experienced an increase in taxes. This represents a significant increase in tax revenue for the county. We, the taxpayers, would expect the tax rate to then to remain the same or even be adjusted downward to alleviate some of the financial hardship placed upon us by the assessment increases. Drastic increases in cost of living, particularly in times of economic hardship, will make living in Fairfax County no longer affordable or even desirable for many. You have been tasked by the people to spend our tax dollars wisely. We, as hard working taxpayers, ask that you look at reform and responsible ways to manage the budget, while minimizing the burden placed on taxpayers. We must be accountable and responsible for our household budgets, and must live within our means. We are asking that you abide by the same principal. Again, please manage the county's budget as tightly as you would your own money. We appreciate your attention to this matter.</p>	4-05-14
18	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>We oppose the proposed increase in the real estate tax rate of \$1.105 for FY 2015. We would like to see a reduction in the proposed rate and the rate currently in effect to offset the increase in real estate taxes that must be paid by us as a result of the higher residential property assessment that has occurred in recent years.</p> <p>We are retired senior citizens on a fixed income and every year we find ourselves faced with ever increasing higher costs of living for essential items such as food, utilities, transportation, medical care, etc., with no or very little means of offsetting the higher costs through more income. We have lived in Mantua since 1991, and there is no question that senior citizens of today find it much harder to afford to continue living here compared to senior citizens who lived here after retirement</p>	3-17-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.</p> <p>During our working years, we were able to shoulder the financial burden of higher real estate taxes when assessments were raised repeatedly for many years. However, when property values decreased, the reduction in taxes was never equal to the prior increases since the tax rate was held in place or raised to reduce the impact due to lower assessments.</p> <p>Now that assessments are on the rise, we want to see some reduction in the tax rate to lessen the impact of higher assessment and a higher real estate tax bill. In our opinion, this action would make it a little more affordable for senior citizens to continue to live in Fairfax County after retirement.</p>	
19	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>My family has only received a 2% total raise in the last 4 years. Because of inflation, that results in a net loss of income. In addition, the cost of most everything we must buy has gone up in price during that time. So have federal taxes. We don't care if services have to be cut, we cannot afford another tax increase whether it is from increased rate or increased assessments. Stop the continuing escalation of taxes to pay for increased services. We can only have the services we can afford no matter how much someone wants them. There is never a shortage of groups who want more paid for by everyone else. Just say no!</p>	3-14-14
20	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>We are writing to request that you seriously consider the impact of raising the tax rate beyond what the County Executive has already proposed. The increase in our real estate assessment will already result in a significant tax increase. That along with an even more significant increase in health insurance premiums again this year, will already require our family to scrutinize and better manage our household budget.</p> <p>We have had children in Fairfax County Public schools for 17 years now. While we appreciate the quality education provided, as active participants in the PTA and Booster programs, we have firsthand witnessed waste and inefficiencies in the system. The school system, like everyone else needs to make the necessary adjustments to operate within a budget that reflects the current economic environment. They cannot just keep requesting more and more every year like they always do.</p>	3-10-14



<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>Enough is enough. Please hold them accountable and force them to change to manage within their current means while the economy remains stagnant. Do not place additional financial burden on families already struggling to manage their own budget, in a time when costs are increasing while their incomes are not.</p> <p>It would be shameful to increase the tax rate and at the end of the fiscal year only discover excess funds in both the County's and School's budgets. This seems to happen on a regular basis and no one takes action to address how to better improve overall financial management to prevent it.</p> <p>We appreciate your and the County Executives efforts and challenges in managing such a large enterprise. The families in the County put in the same effort and face the same challenges themselves. However, theirs as with your individual households are focused at a much lower level, where it becomes evident that times continue to be difficult. Again, please factor this into your discussion regarding increasing the tax rate beyond what Mr. Long has proposed.</p>	
21	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>Supervisor Frey - knowing your long history of fiscal responsibility, I'm certain you were one of the two "no" votes on the recent Board vote to propose up to a 2 cent increase in the property tax rate.</p> <p>While Supervisor Bulova says its "only for discussion", the fact it is on the table when almost 90% of county residents will experience a significant increase in their tax bills as a result of increased property values is outrageous.</p> <p>Speaking for my property, our assessed value increased 7.1%, and that would be our tax increase without the 2 cent increase proposed. So we are looking potentially at a tax increase three times the rate of inflation. In addition, our home insurance rates just increased 10%</p> <p>And while we sympathize with our teachers, they aren't the only ones not getting raises these days, the rest of us are in the same boat. And that is while we try and figure out how to pay our kids college expenses, which keep going up as state funding decreases, and the ever escalating costs to drive the Dulles Toll Road to pay for a metro line that still hasn't opened.</p>	3-07-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>One would like to think that with the increased revenue coming to the county just from the increase in property tax value that you could balance the budget.</p> <p>In fact, how about changing the discussion to decreasing the rate so as to give some relief to homeowners?</p> <p>I know I'm preaching to the choir, I only hope you can bring some common sense to the discussion and to your fellow supervisors.</p>	
22	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>I am writing to protest any increase in the property tax rates. With rising property assessments, increases in highway tolls, stagnant wages, special tax district levies, and increases in health care costs due to the so-called Affordable Care Act, a property tax rate increase at this time will place even more financial strain on struggling families and households in the county.</p> <p>I understand the advertised rate is a ceiling and the final rate approved for FY15 by the Board of Supervisors does not have to reach the advertised rate. I would urge you to support holding the line on property tax rate increases, and, if possible, to cut the current rate given the strong increases in property assessments over the past couple of years, which alone will increase revenue to the county. Although there may be many worthy services more revenue can support and evaluating tradeoffs is not easy; now is not the time to increase the tax burden on county residents.</p> <p>Thank you for your service to the people of the Hunter Mill District, and I hope you will take my comments into consideration when casting your vote for the FY15 property tax rate.</p>	3-09-14
23	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>I oppose any additional increase to Fairfax County real estate taxes to support increased funding for the schools. I am a senior citizen who is retired from the US Government. The tiny increase we got in our annuity will barely support the regular tax increase not counting an increased tax for the schools. If anything, I prefer the county putting more dollars into supporting transportation for senior citizens. As a single senior citizen who has paid Fairfax County real estate taxes since 1983, I have seen very little for my tax dollars. It is time to cut back on funding for schools and do a little bit to help the rest of the citizenry who has supported the school systems demands for so many years.</p>	3-04-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
24	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>The schools and county workers are not the only ones who have been falling behind in pay. In the past 5 years, federal government workers and retirees have had either a freeze or between 1-2% cost of living increases except for 2012 which was 3.6%.</p> <p>In addition, the sequester has forced many employees to take leave without pay making them fall further behind. The federal workers and retirees make up a large part of the population of Fairfax County.</p> <p>So, we don't know how Fairfax County, in good conscience, can propose a budget resulting in a 6.5% increase in property taxes for 2015 let alone consider increasing that to almost 10% by proposing higher property tax rates. Instead, the county should be lowering the tax rate to bring the increase in property taxes more in line with inflation. This large increase impacts many people who are already struggling to make ends meet.</p>	3-02-14
25	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>I know that tax increases or new taxes are not the most popular approach for Government to take. However, given the difference between the budget requested by the Fairfax County Public Schools and the amount of funds available, something has to be done to address the shortfall. If we do not, the quality of the school system will be negatively impacted.</p> <p>I am a homeowner in Fairfax County. I fully understand that a good amount of the property tax I pay goes to support schools. I have no problem with that. And even though my youngest child will graduate from South Lakes High in 2015, I am still willing to pay what is needed to retain the high-caliber school system Fairfax County has a reputation for. That being said, what I do NOT want is another property tax increase to pay for it. That would saddle property owners with all the cost. Renters contribution to the schools is much less than property owners. I would like an approach that spreads the responsibility around to all county residents - not just homeowners. I don't have a preference in terms of how new funds would be raised. Could be a local sales tax. Everyone in the County purchases things, so that would spread the burden to all county residents. Could be a tax on energy consumption. This would have several impacts. First, it would encourage people to conserve energy. Second, people with children will most likely use more energy than those without</p>	3-03-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		kids. This would put more of a burden on those more likely to use the school system.	
26	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>I do not support any type of tax increase. If mean home values increase, real estate taxes should decrease. Just like the Federal gov't, we must learn to control our spending and cut things we cannot afford and/or do not need. I admit I have not read the entire budget proposal; however, there are things we can do without. These are my comments on a couple of the "Additional Proposed Budget Recommendations":</p> <p>- Athletic field maintenance: Unless these are school fields, there's no point in having the public pay for them. Let a commercial entity take it over and those who want to use it can pay for it.</p> <p>- Increase in public safety funding: We have enough police -- I watch them pulling people over for speeding all the time on the way to work. While I don't agree with most speed limits, I also don't condone breaking the law. Nonetheless, we could have a smaller police force if they focused less on victimless crimes such as speeding and marijuana use and focused more on victim oriented crimes such as murders, theft, etc.</p> <p>Thank you for your time, and I hope you take my thoughts into consideration.</p>	3-08-14
27	<b>DON'T RAISE REAL ESTATE TAX RATE</b>	<p>I am appalled to read that Fairfax County is planning to revise (increase) the Real Estate Property tax to \$1.105 per \$100 assessed value.</p> <p>We have just started to get feelers about an improvement in the overall realty prices and there comes another burden by way of increasing the tax. Also, this gets further impounded by the fact that the assessment value in most of the localities of Fairfax county is witnessing an upward trend. This is the perfect moment for the County officials to showcase their responsibilities by empathizing with the home owners and not adding the extra tax burden on them. I strongly reject this proposal and would appreciate if you could please pass on this message to the concerned officials.</p>	3-08-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
28	<b>OPPOSE LIBRARY REDUCTIONS</b>	The county agency that provides some of the biggest return on investment is one of the most invisible: the public library system. Where else do less affluent students find books, computers and research help that they cannot get at home? The library's summer reading program keeps students reading during the summer months, preventing the "summer slide" that sets kids back when they return to school in September. Where else do less affluent preschoolers get access to the books their parents cannot afford? You could save millions in remediation expenses by funding the early literacy initiatives of the public library. You tweeted that your priorities are the schools and helping those in need. The public library system does both, yet you propose to cut the library's budget again. Decimating an institution that has the power to do so much good, and that could help you reach your self-stated goals, does not make sense.	4-08-14
29	<b>OPPOSE LIBRARY REDUCTIONS</b>	<p>I am compelled to protest the Board's plan to cut funds for our libraries. A cut would exacerbate the damage wrought on our collections by the library director and his accomplices in the library branches. We, the taxpayers who love books, have already been victims of Clay's misguided "excessing" pet project, which cut our collections by 250,000 books. Since last August, the collections have dwindled alarmingly, especially at George Mason, by approximately two thirds of their original size. Presently there is almost as much shelf space as books at George Mason regional.</p> <p>The cavalier destruction of 250,000 library books on the library director's initiative is appalling and criminal. Even though every library displays signs with Virginia code 42, warning potential destroyers of library materials that their destruction or defacement is a punishable offense, He cynically claims this was mere "excessing". We will never know how many rare and valuable books fell under the "expendable" rubric.</p> <p>Now the Board of Supervisors plans to cut the library budget by \$250,000; might this figure be some sort of fine for the thrashed volumes, at a buck a book?</p> <p>Granted, tremendous waste of taxpayer funded books should not be rewarded by lavishing of additional funds, especially when the administrator entrusted with their protection has not even apologized for his mismanagement; once he floats away in his golden parachute with his enormous pension, we are left with shrunken resources with which to rebuild the ruins he has left us. With</p>	4-09-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>the aiding and abetting of branch managers like xxx , who needs Attila the Hun or the book-burners of the ancient library of Alexandria?</p> <p>Cutting of funds to a ravaged library system may inspire future administrators to be better guardians of our treasures, but for now it will simply contribute to the dwindling of our learning resources and an additional hardship in replenishing the savaged collections.</p>	
30	<b>CONCERN ABOUT PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS</b>	<p>This year property assessments in my area went up about 14 percent where as my property value went up less than 7 percent. I think this year's assessment is outrageous and unsupportable!!! I strongly recommend that you take a closer look at current property values. You need to look at all property sales in lieu of the carefully selected ones chosen by the county to meet your unrealistic desires. I believe that you don't even consider repossessed properties in your calculations of assessed property values, but they should be considered.</p> <p>Please reply to my concerns. I am not alone in this feeling of unsupportable assessed property values. Just check around my neighborhood for others concerns.</p>	3-24-14
31	<b>DON'T RAISE COUNTY FIELD APPLICATION USER FEE</b>	<p><i>At a time when every citizen is counting every dollar, why would the County make it more difficult for children to participate in youth sports by imposing increased user fees on families?</i> Participation in youth sports has many benefits. Physically, sports help a child's overall health, coordination, and fitness. Socially, sports help children learn to cooperate and compete with other children, understand the value of being on a team, and learn responsibility and leadership. Additionally, sports help children develop self-esteem, learn to make decisions, deal with anxiety and stress, and learn responsibility. Aren't these the things the County should be encouraging rather than discouraging with the onerous 'kiddie tax" increase? County children barely get recess time in the public schools already, seems like the Board is indirectly promoting obesity. This whole tax makes little to no sense...</p>	3-07-14
32	<b>NON-BUDGET</b>	Just wondering if the cost of our health insurance will be going up again this year?	3-12-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
33	<b>SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD</b>	<p>First of all, Fairfax Women's Soccer Association (FWSA) would like to thank Fairfax County for its support in our efforts to turf the stadium and auxiliary fields at Woodson High School in Fairfax. As a result, it was possible to add two more fields to the inventory of lighted, turfed fields for use by both the youth and the community.</p> <p>We would also like to thank you for the opportunity to address the recommendations of the Synthetic Turf Task Force (STTF) as relates to your proposed FY 2015 budget. With regards to the recommendations of the STTF, we specifically would like to address the proposed increases in the athletic user fee from \$5.50 to \$8.00 (an increase of 45%) and tournament user fees from \$15 to \$50 (an increase of 233%) per team.</p> <p>FWSA remains one of the largest adult recreational sports organizations in Fairfax County providing services to over 700 women over two major seasons annually. Over the past thirty years, we have fought to preserve the ability to provide recreational athletic opportunities for adult women in Fairfax County. This has not always been an easy task. Youth usage of county rectangular fields, particularly during daytime, weekend hours, has always been a priority and adults have been relegated to evening hours.</p> <p>The community partnership program for building synthetic fields offered an option for organizations that were well-organized enough and willing to put forth the money to partner with high schools to enter into agreements to install synthetic fields. As a result, several fields have been installed under these partnerships at Fairfax County high schools.</p> <p>As these fields begin to age, they will need to be replaced. We were involved as partners in one of the first synthetic fields to be installed in Fairfax County - at Wakefield Park. Almost ten years later, it is in need of replacement. We understand that the financial pressure to replace the turf covering will not be equal to the initial cost of installation of the original field; however, it will be a substantial investment and the funds that have been collected from user fees over the ensuing years have been used for installation of other turf fields, not specifically earmarked for replacement of the turf fields from which the user fees were collected. An important law of economics is the law of</p>	3-11-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>diminishing returns. As the user fees are raised, the total amount of money collected will actually decline as fewer players are encouraged to register because of the higher fees. If tournament fees are raised, the option of using tournaments to raise money to pay for turf replacements-- and to drive tourist dollars to the county-- will cease to be an option because the pro forma numbers will not work for tournament organizers. They will not organize tournaments if they cannot turn a profit. We understand the need to raise the user and tournament fees; however, we believe that raising them less quickly would result in a better long-term result.</p> <p>Again, thank you for the opportunity to address our concerns.</p>	
34	<b>EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF TAX BURDEN</b>	<p>In regard to Seniors that are allowed to go tax free or pay 50% taxes or 25% taxes.</p> <p>I feel that all persons should pay taxes and not just a few in proportion to the amount that they have made for the year. If someone makes \$52,000 in a year why should they be given taxes free? I have heard some brag that they get them free when mine are \$7,000+ for a single family dwelling on Creek Crossing Rd Vienna VA 22182. I am a senior too yet you are now going to raise my taxes this year by evaluating my property by \$60,000 more. Am I to pay the taxes of these people who like me are allowed to go tax free. This is the way that I see it. I am paying their taxes when they should pay some taxes thus mine will not be higher because they get freedom from taxation.</p> <p>I feel that all persons should pay their fair share of all taxes like income taxes and all taxes based on income.</p>	3-10-14
35	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>	<p>Having worked with you, your staff, and the Fairfax County Police Dept (Reston Station) for more than a decade, as well as having served as your representative on the County's Citizens' Corps Council for four years, I know that you are very familiar with the issues associated with public safety--and personally committed to preserving the good we have achieved and improving where we can. Furthermore, the Board of Supervisors is about to start a week of public hearings at which you will get updated specifics--so I will be brief.</p> <p>The FCPD has a significant (and growing) shortage of officers assigned to patrol duties. The problem will be exacerbated by retirements (driven by age demographics) and cannot be resolved</p>	4-06-14



<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>through recruiting--as we cannot fill incoming classes at the Police Academy now. The problem appears to be a lack of pay parity--especially among the mid-career professionals in the FCPD. As a long-time member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee, it's been my observation that this lack of parity is the most frequently cited factor among those who are considering leaving for one of the federal agencies--which are only too happy to take our trained personnel.</p> <p>To close on a personal note, sir. I've spent 28 years as a Marine infantryman, at every level from platoon to regiment. I have been blessed by good leaders and put up with poor ones--doing my best to help all of them succeed: for the sake of my oath, our nation, and the welfare of the enlisted Marines entrusted to our care. I know good leaders, sir, and am impressed by Chief Roessler. I'm convinced that without his caring, involved leadership, morale, retention, and performance would not be as good as they are. But he's doing "dutch boy duty" and we need to repair the dike.</p> <p>As a citizen, I can support another tax hike, if necessary, but would respectfully encourage you to address the safety of our businesses and communities first. Social spending and education gobble up well more than half of our County's budget and it's tempting to continue to pour resources into them...but without a safe place to live and work, virtually everything else is for naught.</p> <p>I thank you for your time, your years of service to our County, and any help you are able to address the root of the above problems by restoring pay parity for our police.</p>	
36	<b>MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STRONGER TOGETHER PROGRAM</b>	<p>I am writing to you on behalf of the Stronger Together Program of Fairfax County, Virginia. This program was an integral part of the rehabilitation of myself and my daughter, Ruth, who are victims of domestic abuse. While my ex-husband did not ever lay a hand on my daughter, her witness of his actions towards me and other family members and friends was more than enough to cause her to have an acute fear of him. We had separated and there was not a way for him to have any visitation with our daughter unless I let him take her out alone and meet up with him. This was not an option as I had obtained a Protective Order, he was not allowed near me at all or to contact me unless it was about visitation and I did not trust him alone with our daughter because he would adultify her and speak to her inappropriately about family members when alone with her. The idea of being alone with him terrified Ruth. Every time the phone rang or someone knocked on the door</p>	4-05-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>or she would see a black car she was worried that it was him. Any time she would see him in a social situation or even hear his name mentioned she would shake and try to hide. While I enrolled her in therapy, I knew that that would not be enough to help her heal and move forward. I knew that I needed to find a situation where she could see her father in a more positive environment, without me present as he did not act properly around me, to help her overcome her fears, be supervised by strong and vigilant people, feel safe and confident, and possibly guide my ex-husband toward better parenting skills. I did not know about the Stronger Together Program until my friend told me about it. I was extremely relieved that there is something like this in our system—it made perfect sense and changed our life dramatically. I went to meet with the Program Director, Laurie Kirkland, and was immediately impressed by her knowledge, confidence in the program and ability to care not only for my child but healing the relationship between her and her father. She was able to make Ruth feel safe and give my ex-husband a chance to repair his relationship with his daughter. Laurie made it clear to me that this program was about Ruth. The place has a great look, doesn't smell weird (that is important), there are LOTS of toys and crafts to help the children and parents play together again, and many skilled workers and volunteers. I especially loved their ability to give assistance with proper parenting skills without it feeling like that is what was going on. My ex and daughter were able to have the dignity and respect afforded to the dyadic relationship between a father and his daughter.</p> <p>While looking back I strongly feel that Ruth would not be doing as well as she is today if we did not have this program. She is confident, playful, filled with dignity and happy! This environment was exactly what she needed to heal—not to mention my ex-husband and myself. I had felt so helpless and afraid in my situation but I was given empowerment and a way to better my situation and care for my daughter's needs where I thought I was powerless. This program is a necessity to Fairfax County and its many families it has touched in the past and hopefully many families to come.</p>	

Number	Topic	E-Mail Comment	Date
37	<p><b>MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STRONGER TOGETHER PROGRAM</b></p>	<p>As a Guardian <i>ad litem</i>, how do I decide between advocating to the Court that a daughter be forced to visit with her father when she does not feel safe or that she not visit at all? Fortunately, the availability of the Stronger Together program presents an excellent third option. I hope the Board of Supervisors will continue to provide this invaluable service to the Fairfax Juvenile &amp; Domestic Relations Court and the families of Fairfax County.</p> <p>As you are aware, Guardians ad litem must make recommendations to the Court in the child’s best interest. In many of my custody/visitation cases there are allegations that require the Court to order supervised visitation. Supervision by friends or family members is frequently problematic at best, and private agencies that provide supervised visits in the community charge \$75 per hour and up, which is more than many parents can afford. Contact between children and their parents is vitally important -- developmentally and emotionally--but safety must be my paramount concern. Frequently the only way to have visitation occur is at Stronger Together, and I am so grateful that this program exists.</p> <p>Stronger Together provides a friendly, welcoming place for children where they clearly feel cared for and safe. Parents with doubts about allowing visitation feel confident that their child is in no danger in a nurturing environment. Parents who feel they have been falsely accused know that they have objective witnesses who can testify regarding their parenting at visits. Stronger Together produces that rare and wonderful: win, win, win.</p> <p>For over six years I have been recommending Stronger Together in cases where issues have been raised regarding parenting ability and/or the safety of visits. A number of times after Stronger Together visitation I have been pleased to see large improvements in the parent/child relationship, so that I could advocate for, and the Court could order, moving to unsupervised visits. I have also had cases where visitation could not be made to work. In those instances having Stronger Together staff available to testify was a unique and valued resource for the Court. Children deserve the opportunity to have a safe, ongoing relationship with their parents, and Stronger Together makes this possible.</p>	4-08-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>Visitation at Stronger Together prevents many of the all too typical arguments between parents regarding pick-up/drop off times and transportation issues, and makes for smooth transitions between parents, which are of incalculable benefit to the children involved. It also prevents the trauma for children when police are called out to their home to attempt to enforce a visitation Court Order, as it does away with baseless calls for investigations by Child Protective Services.</p> <p>In June, 2013, I was before the J&amp;DR Court, and I recommended Stronger Together to the parents. They opted for supervision by the paternal grandmother. Sadly, that child has not seen his father since August. The father has since filed four motions with the Court, and we are currently docketed in July for a status hearing to schedule a hearing on a Rule to Show Cause to determine if the mother’s withholding of visitation is justified. This turn of events is horrible for all involved, but most particularly for this little boy, caught in the middle of a fight between his parents, deprived of the opportunity to have any relationship with his father. His plight will likely be repeated time and again in Fairfax County if Stronger Together is not available for our families.</p> <p>For all of the reasons above, and many more, I want to thank the Board of Supervisors for funding Stronger Together, and urge you to continue to do so.</p>	
38	<b>MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STRONGER TOGETHER PROGRAM</b>	<p>I am writing to express my strong support for the Fairfax County Stronger Together Program. I will be forever grateful for the care and facility Lori Wymore-Kirkland and her team gave my family. Before I met Lori in August 2013, my daughters Lucy and Liliane, ages 5 and 3, had not seen their father for over six months. He had suffered a mental breakdown in December 2012 and had struggled to follow through with the prescribed treatment. My girls were broken hearted by their father’s disappearance and I had no idea how to make it better for them. I simply couldn’t agree to their dad’s demands that he have unrestricted access given his condition and the girls’ young age, for which they were completely dependent.</p> <p>It was such a lifeline when the Fairfax County Juvenile Court offered us supervised visitation through Stronger Together. Lori was so understanding and clearly had a lot of experience dealing with situations like ours. She even managed to convince the girls’ father to give it a try, as he was initially reluctant. The Stronger Together team was highly committed, constantly initiating and</p>	4-06-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>following up to keep the visits on track. I can't put in to words what a relief it was to know that my daughters were in good hands while they were at the center despite my constant worries about how their father might be on any given day. The girls always left their visits happy, practically skipping out of the center with big smiles.</p> <p>That the program was affordable helped tremendously. We have been under enormous financial strain since our family fell apart and neither the girls' dad nor I had resources to pay for private visitation services. I truly believe that if I had been left on my own to figure this all out, the cost and the constant drama from engaging directly with dad would have been a serious impediment – one I don't think we could have overcome. The reality of our situation likely means it will be a challenge to sustain a functional, positive relationship between my daughters and their father. However, without a program like Stronger Together, this would have been impossible. Please continue to allocate resources to this wonderful program.</p>	
39	<p><b>MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STRONGER TOGETHER PROGRAM</b></p>	<p>I am currently a graduate student studying Clinical Mental Health Therapy at Argosy University, and a recent graduate from George Mason University in as of December 2011. During my undergraduate career at George Mason University, I chose to major in Conflict Analysis and Resolution – with a concentration in Interpersonal Relationships.</p> <p>As a part of my undergraduate degree requirements, I was required to find an internship. I didn't find much interest in the list provided by the school, so I decided to search for something special to me on my own. During my research, I stumbled upon the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court's volunteer and internship website. I contacted the volunteer/internship coordinator and before I knew it was I found myself in an interview.</p> <p>The program coordinator placed me in the Stronger Together Supervised Visitation and Exchange Program. I never thought it would be possible, but I immediately feel in love with the environment, what the program stood for, and the employees who made it all happen. It was the best internship experience I could've ever asked for. The faculty and students at my school were very impressed as well.</p>	4-04-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>Seeing how big of an impact the program has made for all these families is what helped me decide to get into the field of Mental Healthy Therapy. The program displays such passion, joy, and dedication to each family, parent, and child to ensure they have the most respectful and personal experience possible.</p> <p>After I graduated, I continued to volunteer for the program. This program and the people involved have become family to me. Stronger Together, in my opinion, is a need in our community. I state with confidence that families who are in difficult legal situations thoroughly appreciate what this program does for them and their loved ones. Stronger Together gives families the opportunity to be together as a family unit. In addition, it also allows them to continue to value the importance of love for one another.</p> <p>My hope is that Stronger Together continues so that more families are able benefit from this extraordinary program that I am proud to call my second home. In addition to helping families, I hope that other students and individuals are able to gain such valuable experience by interning and volunteering for this organization.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read about my passion for Stronger Together.</p>	
40	<p><b>MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STRONGER TOGETHER PROGRAM</b></p>	<p>As a volunteer with the Stronger Together Program of the Juvenile Domestic Relations Courts Supervised Visitation and Supervised Exchange Program I was very surprised and disappointed upon being informed of its potential closure due to the budgeting issues. The program is not only an essential part of the families receiving the services of Stronger Together, but also crucial element of the Juvenile Domestic Relations Court.</p> <p>While being part of this program I continually see families being able to share time together in a safe and happy environment. These are families who might not otherwise be able to come back together due to their court orders. The program provides an atmosphere of love and of security. There is a true sincerity in the desire for the employees and volunteers to ensure the families are able to share their time together in a nurturing atmosphere.</p>	

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>I have been a volunteer with many programs throughout the county. I can say without any reservations that none of them compare to the fulfillment I get while being part of this one. There is no comparison of being given the ability to see a mother getting to reunite with her daughter for the first time in months, and sharing in the moment to ensure they are kept in a harmless and protected surrounding. Or sharing the moment that a father gets to see his son for the first time in years, and knowing that by our presence this was allowed to happen. No price can be or should be put on that.</p> <p>Based upon the benefits the program provides to families, the court System and to the citizens of Fairfax County, I believe the Board should be reviewing the budget to provide more funds to this program. The Board should be promoting the Stronger Together program and seeking methods to assist in its expansion.</p> <p>As a father, husband, homeowner and taxpayer in this county, I would strongly recommend you approve the budget to continue this program. Stronger Together is an example of what makes Fairfax County a “better place to live.”</p>	
41	<b>MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STRONGER TOGETHER PROGRAM</b>	<p>I am writing today in very strong support of the Stronger Together Program and for continued funding for it. I appreciate the opportunity to express my thoughts in a letter. I very much wanted to come deliver these sentiments to you in-person, but my schedule unfortunately would not allow it.</p> <p>In June of 2013, supervised visitation for my three-year old son was Court-ordered. The visitation occurred at the Stronger Together program from July 2013 through January 2014. During that seven-month period, my son and his mother had two, ninety-minute visits, each week.</p> <p>Initially, my son’s mother and I both had significant reservations about using a supervised visitation center. We had preconceptions that the center would be a dreary and depressing place and that our son potentially would suffer from visits there. We could not have been more wrong. The Stronger Together facility and program are, quite simply, exceptional. First, the center itself is a warm and fun place. The number of toys there rivals what one might find in a small toy store! My</p>	

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>impression is that most of the toys are donations.</p> <p>The people, though, are what make Stronger Together so wonderful. The small staff is excellent. They are compassionate and kind and very knowledgeable about children and parenting. They create a safe, fun and caring environment for both the children and parents. Our son so much enjoyed going there that he was disappointed when the supervised visitation ended, and he still asks me from time-to-time when he can go back to the “playroom” as we called it.</p> <p>Of special note, the director, Lori Wymore-Kirkland, is absolutely extraordinary. My understanding is that she is working with 40 or more families at any given time, each of whom is dealing with difficult and unique circumstances. In addition to coordinating visits and overseeing the staff, Lori also learns about each family and provides support to parents and families who often are going through some really difficult times.</p> <p>In hearing the name of the program – “Stronger Together”- my initial reaction was that this was just a pleasant-sounding name for a room with security guards. Nothing could be further from the truth. Families who go through this program really do grow stronger owing to the efforts of the staff. I am certain my family has!</p> <p>Stronger Together is more than a necessary facility. It is, in my view, a program that should stand as a national model. Any funds directed at it are an investment in the children and families that use it. The long-term benefits of strengthening families and providing support to parents and children, who otherwise may be at future risk, far, far outweigh any funding the County provides the program in my view.</p> <p>Thank you again for allowing me to express my thoughts and for taking the time to listen to them. I am happy to speak to any of you further about Stronger Together at any point.</p>	



Number	Topic	E-Mail Comment	Date
42	<b>MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR THE STRONGER TOGETHER PROGRAM</b>	<p>For many years I have served as a Guardian <i>ad litem</i> in the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. As a Guardian <i>ad litem</i>, my role is to advocate for the best interest of children. Since its inception in November 2007, the Stronger Together Program has played a vital role in many of my cases. We are often confronted with issues involving domestic violence, suspected domestic violence, substance abuse or other family and mental health issues which make regular visitation impossible.</p> <p>The Stronger Together Program allows the parent child connection to remain in place while parents work on resolving their issues. If it were not for the Stronger Together Program, the court would be faced with cutting off parent child connections for lengthy periods of time which might lead to a complete severance of the parent child bonds. The program is essential to maintaining family connections for the children. The program also provides vital information to the Guardian <i>ad litem</i> and to the court regarding a parent child relationship. The staff has the opportunity to closely observe the family and provide useful information. The program also provides the Guardian <i>ad litem</i> with the opportunity to actually observe the parent child relationship.</p> <p>The full time staff and volunteers are truly dedicated to the welfare of the children that participate in the program. The staff frequently contact me with areas of concern or information regarding the progress of the family. The program has provided a safe and secure setting for children to continue their relationships with parents when it would otherwise be extremely difficult or impossible for the relationship to continue. When the program was initiated in 2007, there were very few community resources available for supervised visitation. In most cases, the cost of the resources made the use of the resource prohibitive. The Stronger Together Program has met a vital need in the community.</p> <p>I urge the Board of Supervisors to give full support to the Stronger Together Program. The program provides services that are urgently needed in the community and the quality of the service is outstanding. Ms. Wymore-Kirkland and her staff are to be commended for their service to Fairfax County families.</p>	4-02-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
43	VARIOUS	<p>Thanks for affording me the opportunity to comment on the Fairfax County Budget. I would like to note that since the density of the Dranesville district has increased significantly in the more than 25 years I have been in this area, I have been mystified by the fact that Commercial developers are creating the projects that create jobs and drive the economy and cause the congestion and attendant density problems; yet are not paying their fair share of property taxes. It is high time that Fairfax county adopt an impact-fee based assessment system to ensure that new developments are paying their fair share of the tax burden. It seems implausible that the Commercial real estate assessments generate only 20% of the tax receipts for the county. Frankly vacancy rates for commercial space seem like a red-herring. The fact remains that there is a building that should be taxed at rates in excess of the rates paid by residents on residential real estate. Moreover, the county also collects BPOL tax from the businesses, so where are those monies going?</p> <p>My sense is that Fairfax county needs to adopt a zero-based budget and stop the prolific spending on police cars and equipment for which the county is famous. It is high time the county lived within its means and stopped the profligate spending for which it is famous. Furthermore, I would like the county to address the situation where senior citizens are relocating to the county to purchase property and then claim the reduced tax rate based on their age, so that they do not have to pay real estate taxes at all or at significantly reduced rates. If these people can move to the area and buy or build a \$2mm home, then they can pay their fair share of property taxes on the property, age notwithstanding.</p> <p>It would also be helpful to enforce the registration of vehicles from out-of-state, as this would likely increase property tax revenue. We are astounded by the number of vehicles from out-of-state that have been in the county for years, yet pay no property taxes because the vehicles are registered in another state. These vehicles have been here for years. While arguably property tax on vehicles is a regressive tax that should be abolished, it is still the law and those of us paying our taxes should not be subsidizing the scofflaws from out of state who have relocated for a job in the area but who do not register their vehicle here. I realize there are exceptions for military personnel, but in our neighborhood we have at least 7-9 vehicles that are garaged in Fairfax county with out of state tags. These are all private sector employees. Just go down to Corland court and Dumbarton St and look</p>	4-03-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>at the homes there and see the vehicles parked in the garages and ask, how can your car be from Texas yet your home is in Virginia?</p> <p>Thanks for the opportunity to provide input into the budgeting process. I appreciate your consideration.</p>	
44	VARIOUS	<p>I have multiple comments to share regarding the proposed FY2015 budget.</p> <p>1) Fund the Bike Coordinator position            One of the main priorities of the Board of Supervisors is an Efficient Transportation Network: "We will continue to plan for and invest in transportation improvements to include comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian initiatives." And yet the county with the third highest income in the U.S. may not be able to find the funds for a bike coordinator or an active bike program.</p> <p>The Bicycle Master Plan, which recommends a funded bike program (\$500,000) and 3 full-time staff positions, is about to come before the Board. The county executive is recommending that the position of the person who developed the plan, and who is critical to implementation, be eliminated. The county recently received over \$200 million for bicycle and pedestrian projects. Eliminating the bike coordinator position does not make sense.</p> <p>As a recreational bicyclist and occasional bike commuter, I have had the opportunity to travel through many areas of the county and see the effects of bicycling infrastructure on our residents. Far too often, I feel forced to choose to get in my car and drive instead of making a trip I could easily make by bike, if only the support were there. For example, it is essentially impossible for me to ride from my home in Vienna to Tysons Corner. Any routes I might choose to take involve high speed cars and/or narrow and dangerous roads. This should be a no-brainer for Fairfax County, but I see little coming in the way of facilitating pedestrian and bike access from Vienna to Tysons. I urge you to find funding for the bike coordinator position.</p>	4-09-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>2) School Funding After watching our teachers work for years without any hope of a pay raise, I hope the County will provide enough funding to FCPS to allow our hard-working teachers to earn pay that remains competitive with neighboring jurisdictions.</p> <p>3) Parks and libraries I strongly support funding for parks and libraries. Of all of the so-called "discretionary" spending, these are the items that I and my family use the most.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>	
45	VARIOUS	<p>These are my concerns:</p> <p>1) Please increase the pay of our teachers. They are working harder than ever with increased class sizes and expectations, and we cannot afford to lose any more of our teachers to Arlington or Loudoun counties. It is necessary for our children to have these great, experienced teachers, and our property values are directly tied to our schools and our location. They both count.</p> <p>2) Please pass a meal tax in Fairfax County, since we have a lot of people who work in Fairfax County who do not live in Fairfax County. We need this revenue source.</p>	4-03-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
46	VARIOUS	<p>I urge you to oppose the efforts to increase the property tax rates. The increased assessments are already a hefty increase, in my case about 10%.</p> <p>I urge you to find a way to reduce or stabilize pension benefit obligations: get county employees to pay more, increase the retirement age, etc.</p> <p>Encourage a business friendly climate in the county. The fruits are seen in the new growth of Tysons, such as the fabulous Capital One plan that will ultimately add over \$ 6 million in new tax revenue.</p>	4-03-14
47	FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION	<p>The Fairfax County Bicycle Master Plan was completed in July 2012. The Plan recommends that the county devote \$500,000 to the Bicycle Program and "Provide a minimum staff of three full-time employees." The Bike Coordinator will present the Plan to the Planning Commission and Board this spring for their adoption. The Coordinator position is critical to ensuring that the plan is adopted and implemented.</p> <p>Bicycling as a mode of transportation continues to grow each year. More people are looking for ways to get around using active transportation and relying less on driving cars. The Board is focusing growth around activity and transit centers and bicycling is a critical component to the success of those places. With no permanent car parking planned at the Tysons Metro stations, citizens will need multiple options to access the stations.</p> <p>A major priority of the Board is an "Efficient Transportation Network" that includes "comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian initiatives." Without a bike coordinator that goal is not possible.</p> <p>Arlington County, with 1/5 our population, has 6 full time people devoted to building bike facilities, encouraging people to bike, and educating cyclists and motorists. Rather than eliminating the Bike Coordinator position, Fairfax should be funding the program and expanding staff.</p> <p>Eliminating the Bike Coordinator position sends the wrong message to employers who are trying to</p>	4-03-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>attract young professionals, more and more of whom are demanding more transportation options including biking and walking.</p> <p>I urge the Board to fund the Bike Coordinator position.</p>	
48	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>Please support more bicycling positions and efforts. It is a very sad note to see that Fairfax County has 1200 public school bus drivers and, maybe, one person working on Fairfax County Safe Routes to School issues full time.</p> <p>The Fairfax County Bicycle Master Plan was completed in July 2012 and should be appearing before you soon for approval. The Plan recommends that the county devote \$500,000 to the Bicycle Program and "Provide a minimum staff of three full-time employees." The Bike Coordinator will present the Plan to the Planning Commission and Board this spring for their adoption. The Coordinator position is critical to ensuring that the plan is adopted and implemented.</p> <p>Bicycling as a mode of transportation continues to grow each year. More people are looking for ways to get around using active transportation and relying less on driving cars. The Board is focusing growth around activity and transit centers and bicycling is a critical component to the success of those places. With no permanent car parking planned at the Tysons Metro stations, citizens will need multiple options to access the stations. The Columbia Pike Trolley will also potentially increase interest in multimodal options in the Annandale area.</p> <p>Arlington County, with 1/5 our population, has 6 full time people devoted to building bike facilities, encouraging people to bike, and educating cyclists and motorists. Rather than eliminating the Bike Coordinator position, Fairfax should be funding the program and expanding staff. If enough kids ride their bikes to school, we might even be able to, shudder, not hire as many school bus drivers.</p>	4-14-14
49	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>The Trails and Sidewalks Committee is deeply concerned with the potential elimination of the Bike Coordinator Position in FY 2015 budget. The County has made great strides in enabling bicycles to make our transportation system more to efficient, don't waste it.</p>	4-09-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>Including this position in the possible budget reductions list just at the time when we are seeing the beneficial increase in bicycle use for commuting and recreation and with the Silver Line coming to Tysons, would be a significant disservice to the County's residents. It would also be wasteful of County resources not to open the bike rooms at Metro and Transit Centers that would facilitate bicycle commuting.</p> <p>In addition to the enumeration of negative impact shown in the County Executive's memo, this position has been of invaluable service to this Committee in meeting its responsibilities. It has also provided a very effective means to increase public safety through the addition of bike lanes to encourage bicycle commuting, at little cost to the County, by coordinating with VDOT on restriping during road repaving.</p> <p>As new transportation funding accelerates projects, the Bike Coordinator will be essential in integrating the road and trail network. We believe the Bike Coordinator Position is a very cost effective one that enhances the public safety and improves transportation efficiency by encouraging the reduction of single occupancy automobile traffic.</p> <p>This position should be retained.</p>	
50	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	I concur with the members of the Trails and Sidewalks committee in the need to retain the Bicycle Coordinator position. There has been a great improvement in bicycling in Fairfax County in the last few years, without the bicycle coordinator position I fear we would fall back to a prior time when there was no support for bicycling in the County.	4-10-14
51	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	I'm concerned that the Bicycle Coordinator position is listed for potential elimination. Bicycling in Fairfax County and the great Washington region is finally achieving its due as a viable means of transportation. More children are bicycling to school. More commuters are leaving their cars behind and traveling along the W&OD and roadways to get to work. More residents are using bicycles for short trips to the store. In addition, the Bicycle Master Plan is near complete and is to be voted on within the next few months. The Plan recommends the county devote \$500,000 to the Bicycle Program and "Provide a minimum staff of three full-time employees." The Coordinator position is critical to the plan's adoption and implementation. A major priority of the Board is an	4-09-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>"Efficient Transportation Network" that includes "comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian initiatives." Without a bike coordinator that goal is not possible and will never be achieved. Eliminating the Bike Coordinator position sends the wrong message at a time when it is needed most and is incredibly shortsighted.</p>	
52	<p><b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b></p>	<p>Bicycling is a mode of transportation that is becoming more and more popular. This mode is limited only by the perceived safety, or lack thereof. Safety is provided by good infrastructure for biking just as it is for cars and pedestrians. If Fairfax continues and accelerates the installation of bike infrastructure we will find that we improve traffic congestion and the health and welfare of the citizens. I'm hearing that the bike coordinator's position is at risk of termination. Eliminating this position will hamper the growth of bike infrastructure in Fairfax and consequently limit the ability of more citizens to take advantage of this mode of transportation.</p> <p>The Fairfax County Bicycle Master Plan was completed in July 2012. The Plan recommends that the county devote \$500,000 to the Bicycle Program and "Provide a minimum staff of three full-time employees." The Bike Coordinator will present the Plan to the Planning Commission and Board this spring for adoption. The Bike Coordinator position is critical to ensuring that the plan is adopted and implemented.</p> <p>Bicycling as a mode of transportation continues to grow each year. More people are looking for ways to get around using active transportation and relying less on driving cars. The Board is focusing growth around activity and transit centers and bicycling is a critical component to the success of those places. The design of the METRO Silverline requires multiple options to access the stations. Biking will have to be one of these options.</p> <p>A major priority of the Board is an "Efficient Transportation Network" that includes "comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian initiatives." Without a bike coordinator that goal is not possible.</p> <p>Fairfax County is trying to attract companies with young professionals. These potential new citizens want transportation options. Without good bike infrastructure they are going to move to</p>	4-09-14



<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>Arlington where bike infrastructure is better supported. Arlington County, with 1/5 our population, has 6 full time people devoted to building bike facilities, encouraging people to bike, and educating cyclists and motorists. Rather than eliminating the Bike Coordinator position, Fairfax should be funding the program and expanding staff.</p> <p>I urge the Board to fund the Bike Coordinator position.</p>	
53	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>I wanted to take a moment and express my concern over the potential elimination of this position from the Fairfax County budget. As a resident of Fairfax County (Herndon) I would like to see the work this position supports continue as I believe it is essential to building and maintaining a community dedicated to healthy lifestyles, one that has all the resources for me to raise my children and instill the value of health and fitness early so they become simply part of who they are and what they do each day. I am constantly struck when I visit other places at how fortunate we are in Fairfax County to have all of these things available to support health and fitness, and it remains one of the reasons why my husband and I have continued to raise our family in this area.</p> <p>I appreciate your time, and welcome any additional insight into things I might do to preserve this position in the budget.</p>	4-09-14
54	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>I support full funding of the Bike Coordinator position as well as a budget for staff for the bike coordinator office in the 2015 budget.</p> <p>This is such a critical time to continue to elevate biking as a safe transportation mode. Cities across the country are seeing renewed interest for transportation, environmental, economic, and health reasons.</p> <p>Bike sharing programs are growing, as are Safe Routes to School programs, bike safety, and federal funding initiatives that need coordination on the county level. The county bike plan needs oversight and implementation. Biking is also an important component in metro expansion in the county being a crucial last mile link between residents and employees to transit systems.</p> <p>With all of these critical needs now is not to time to pull the plug on a function that has immediate</p>	4-09-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>and direct positive impact on the quality of life and economics of Fairfax County.</p> <p>I want my tax dollars to be allocated to support the numerous biking needs in the county including the Bike Coordinator position.</p>	
55	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>Please re-instate this vital position and ensure it is NOT eliminated from the 2015 budget as well as a budget for the role to work with. This is an important position that as Fairfax County continues to grow, it will be needed support its previous initiatives and other green activities.</p>	4-09-14
56	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>This position needs to be reexamined. It could be enormously helpful in making biking safe and accessible to Fairfax County residents.</p> <p>We have run out of road capacity. We must look at other alternatives to cars. Bikes are an alternative, but only if people feel safe.</p> <p>A Bike Coordinator is needed. In fact, a department is needed to reach all the areas of the county in terms of making biking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safe</li> <li>• accessible</li> <li>• known (there is such little awareness of the trails and bike friendly routes)</li> </ul>	4-09-14
57	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>I write in support of the County Bike Coordinator position. I was upset to learn the position had been included on a list of possible budget reductions provided by County Executive Long to the Board of Supervisors. It is disheartening the County would even consider eliminating this position, which is at the heart of a much-needed County bicycling program.</p> <p>Bicycling is a fun, healthy and affordable recreation and transportation option that helps to reduce traffic, improve air quality and provide for greater public health and physical fitness. Communities that are bike and pedestrian friendly experience greater property values and increased business growth.</p> <p>The County Bike Coordinator is critical to the bicycle program coordinating development and</p>	4-09-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>implementation of the County Bicycle Master Plan, overseeing the installation of new bike facilities, and being an advocate for bicycling across Fairfax County.</p> <p>I am thankful that Fairfax County recently approved over \$200 million in much-needed bicycle and pedestrian projects but without the Bike Coordinator these projects would languish and risk wasting taxpayers money.</p> <p>The County would also not be able to participate in Bike-to-Work Day and other successful bike-related community activities that serve to promote bicycling, raise awareness about its benefits and provide safety education to the community.</p> <p>Underfunding the bicycle program and potentially eliminating the Bike Coordinator position is doing a disservice to us County residents and sends the wrong message about our priorities. I ask you to not only ensure the Bike Coordinator position is not eliminated but fully support this program by providing it funding and helping it grow into the robust bicycling program this County and its residents deserve.</p>	
58	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>I was very disappointed to hear that the Fairfax County Executive included the Bicycle Coordinator position in a list of possible budget reductions. I urge that the County reconsider this move and remove the Bicycle Coordinator from the list of possible budget reductions. Losing this position goes directly against one of the main priorities of the Board of Supervisors for an Efficient Transportation Network, which requires comprehensive bicycle initiatives. The County will need a coordinator to help make these initiatives work.</p> <p>Again, please continue to fund and support the Bicycle Coordinator.</p>	4-10-14
59	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>I am writing in support of funding the Bicycle Coordinator position for Fairfax County. This position is key to coordinating other organizations and sources of alternate funding for this vital part of our transportation network. The County cannot get behind Transit Oriented Development and Silver Line expansion projects without funding bicycle programs. Bicycles are simply the most economical way to get people to our Metro Stations. Dollar for dollar we cannot do any better than supporting bicycling.</p>	4-08-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
60	FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION	I am writing to urge you not to cut the bicycle coordinator position in the FY 2015 budget. If the county is serious about reducing traffic congestion, it needs to be serious about promoting the full range of transportation modes. One managerial position focused on bicycling in a 400 square-mile jurisdiction is a very bare minimum need for planning and implementing bicycle projects. Thank you for considering my views.	4-08-14
61	FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION	<p>I urge the County to get serious about promoting health, economic prosperity, and environmental responsibility by funding the bike coordinator position and giving that individual an actual budget to work with.</p> <p>Bicycling promotes health in individuals, reduces congestion, increases revenue for businesses where bike infrastructure exists, and helps clean up the environment in that bikes do not use fossil fuels.</p> <p>Further, the County has done very well in the last several years installing bits and pieces of bike infrastructure in various locations. The plan, of course, is to eventually connect all those bits and pieces. The plan is available, and the leadership to implement the plan needs to be strong. Eliminating this position will more than likely result in a waste of the infrastructure that has already been funded as the follow-through on these projects requires someone knowledgeable about this particular type of traffic engineering.</p> <p>Although we claim to be one of the leading Counties in the nation in many categories, it is only in the past year that one of our communities (Reston) was able to achieve a bronze level Bicycle Friend Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists. It was a long time coming, and largely achieved due to the hard work of the bicycle coordinator finding ways to get the infrastructure changes to support cycling. Reston is just the tip of the iceberg though. There are cyclists throughout this County who will benefit from better overall planning for this very important transportation choice. To squander this opportunity by not funding this position is a shame.</p> <p>Please reinstate the Bicycle Coordinator position, along with a budget for that individual to use to</p>	4-09-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		do his job.	
62	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	As a parent in a family of cyclists, I urge you to reinstate the position of Bicycling Coordinator in the 2015 Budget. With the growth of our county and increased traffic congestion, we need intelligent planning and transportation alternatives. We've made huge strides for cyclists recently - please don't negate all of the hard work which has been invested.	4-10-14
63	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	The bike coordinator position has been beneficial and is already overstretched. I strongly support retaining the position and I feel that the incumbent has made tangible improvements to the quality of life in Fairfax county. Personally, I think it would be better to have more than one bike coordinator, or more of a budget for this type of thing than there has been. Eliminating the position would be shortsighted and detrimental to the county's long term interests.	4-10-14
64	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>I am writing to you to share my thoughts about one of the FCDOT positions nominated for elimination in the County Executive's budget proposal. Frankly, I am surprised at this move. The timing, message to the community and loss of this position's functions are counterproductive.</p> <p>You already know this, but it's worth repeating because it sets the context for my concern. The County is taking major steps to compete for jobs and workforce in our highly competitive region and nationally. Tysons and the Silver Line are the County's responding to employer and public demands for alternative transportation options and communities designed to attract the critical Millennial workforce. Our future tax base lies in the success of these projects. Bike design is a critical component of those plans.</p> <p>If the Bike Coordinator position is eliminated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The county will not be able to implement the Bicycle Master Plan.</li> <li>• Sends the wrong message to supporters of bicycling as a transportation mode.</li> <li>• It sends the wrong message to employers who are trying to attract young professionals, more and more of whom are demanding more transportation options including biking and walking.</li> </ul>	4-08-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It goes against the Board priority of having an "Efficient Transportation Network" that includes "comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian initiatives."</li> <li>• It impacts our Healthy Communities initiatives, and Safe Routes to Schools.</li> </ul> <p>Arlington, with 1/5 our population, has six full time people devoted to building bike facilities, encouraging people to bike, and educating cyclists and motorists.</p> <p>Fairfax spends approximately \$90 million on Fairfax Connector with over 100 employees. We should be able to support several bicycle program staff to promote bicycling, a nearly comparable mode of travel. The Bicycle Master Plan recommends three full-time staff.</p> <p>This past weekend I was privileged to attend The National Alliance for Biking and Walking Open Streets Summit in Los Angeles and see firsthand the results of engaging the community in an event (CicLAvia) designed to have the public experience their streets, their transit, and their community. Los Angeles is competing for the same employers we are. It is ahead of Fairfax County in advancing the policies necessary to create the public spaces we are working towards, but we are not that far behind. Fairfax County will catch up and successfully compete for employers and employees, with even the likes of Los Angeles, only if we stay the course and implement the transportation policies we have set in motion.</p> <p>We need to strengthen our ability to implement bicycle transportation programs, not cut them. Now is not the time.</p>	
65	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	<p>Please keep the Bike Coordinator Position!                      In addition to funding the position, please allow a budget for this position as well.</p> <p>Thank You Very Much!</p>	4-08-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
66	<b>FUND THE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	As you make your decisions on this year's budget, I ask that you please retain the Bicycle Coordinator position and add new positions. More Transportation staff members are vitally needed as the county rolls out almost 200 new projects added through the Countywide Dialogue on Transportation process. At least one bicycle and a pedestrian point person are necessary to have the perspective on all bike and ped projects to handle questions fielded by residents and to handle public hearings. A bicycle coordinator will also be critical for rollout of the Bicycle Master Plan and to help to establish a truly multi-modal transportation system in the county which will require further synergy with pedestrian, transit and road aspects.	4-12-14
67	<b>ELIMINATE BIKE COORDINATOR POSITION</b>	I understand budgeting priorities. In Fairfax County we have a wealth of knowledgeable, passionate, hard-working bike-enthusiasts who are willing to provide expertise to the County. If funds are not available for a paid Bike Coordinator, please maintain the position for un-paid volunteers. This function is too important to eliminate, regardless of funding.	4-09-14
68	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<p>As the county struggles to close a \$63 million gap between what the FCPS has requested and what the BOS can offer, I ask that you allocate a small sum toward finding efficiencies and revealing inefficiencies within the FCPS transportation system.</p> <p>Too many seats on FCPS go empty because FCPS parents drive their children to school. Not only does this waste millions of dollars, it creates unsafe traffic and air quality conditions around the schools and exposes student and teacher makeshift car valets to unhealthy car emissions. Schools then exacerbate this waste by spending millions more on infrastructure by expanding kiss-and-drop facilities. At the high school level, many students also eschew yellow busses, clogging school parking lots with cars when they might more readily and cheaply take a convenient pre-existing public bus to school. Meanwhile, many county schools are missing sidewalk connections which would enable nearby children to walk or bike to school and make bus service unnecessary.</p> <p>There are millions of dollars to be saved if current transportation conditions are studied and strategies are recommended. Please allocate funding for a thorough consultant's review of the real costs of FCPS transportation with an eye toward creating synergies with the county's public bus system.</p>	4-12-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
69	<b>LOCAL HIRING INITIATIVE</b>	Local hiring initiative by the county that markets the skill available in the local population of Dranesville district should encourage potential employees to fill up the empty offices. This could result in lower office space vacancy rates and higher commercial real estate assessments. It could also result in more local opportunities for our residents who have to travel to Maryland on a daily basis.	4-03-14
70	<b>COMMENTS ON METRO</b>	why no news about the disastrous Metro? anyone being penalized? doubt it....any political consequences? doubt it... why have the tolls risen when there is not operating train? why do those coming and going from Dulles, mainly out of state business people, pay no tolls?	3-31-14
71	<b>SUPPORT HUMAN SERVICES</b>	<p>As an Advisory Board (AB) member of the Joe and Fredona Gartlan Center for Community Mental Health in Mount Vernon, I am also the organizer of NEXUS, an outreach committee made-up of AB members and local citizens, advocating for the best mental health outcomes possible for our children and adolescents.</p> <p>We were pleased to see the Chair, our stellar Supervisor Gerry and others supporting the opening of Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc. (ANHSI) at Gartlan. NEXUS enthusiastically endorses community services, public and private resources, governing representatives, schools and citizens working together on behalf of families and the young. We urge further collaborations to build a continuum of mental and physical health care from cradle to grave for Fairfax communities.</p> <p>Access to Hope: Whole Child, &amp; Whole Health...</p> <p>Facilitating Health and Resiliency in the Community, Family, and School: Please, see the invitation which follows this letter - for all Board of Supervisors' (BOS) members and staff to join us at our annual conference that includes health professionals, educators and the public, May 9 at Virginia Hills Center 10:00 AM-3:30 PM. Of timely interest is our NIMH researcher who will speak about - How violent behavior happens and if we can do anything about it.</p> <p>Upcoming Budget Decisions: We urge the BOS to support funding for the future - by fully funding schools and services impacting the young in Fairfax County and to please influence state legislators to take up their mental health funding responsibilities in order to keep safe our at-risk youth and families, and the</p>	4-07-14



<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>public. Those with mental health issues are not more likely to cause violence than any other societal segment as you know – but without support, they suffer, the stigma of mental health grows, and the public misunderstands their needs. Some believe mental health problems are an excuse for not working, or for unsuccessful behavioral decisions. Our community goals and therefore funding should align with Virginia CSB’s.</p> <p>First Priorities First:                      We support the Human Services Council’s endorsement and the County Executive’s recommendation to increase the County’s investment in the human services baseline budget by \$8.5 million for growing service needs, case complexity, and workload demands, rising faster than available resources. Of the \$8.5 million, \$6.9 million is focused on four critical areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• @\$2.9 million to sustain human services provided by nonprofits and community organizations</li> <li>• @\$1.7 million to help address significantly increasing public assistance caseloads</li> <li>• @\$1.3 million for support and employment programs for graduates with intellectual disabilities</li> <li>• @\$1.0 million for behavioral health services for youth and families</li> </ul> <p>The impact of potential reductions to our human services systems and schools, especially threaten prevention and intervention services across the County but especially in Mount Vernon District, where depression, poverty and the diverse health needs of diverse populations impede the success of families and the young. In our neighborhoods, particular harm would befall children and youth if cuts were made to FCPS, and</p> <p>Successful Prevention programs such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant and Toddler Connection for early clinical intervention</li> <li>• Continued Mental Health First Aid Training for adults and the young for violence prevention and mental health needs awareness, including for fire and police employees</li> <li>• Mobile crisis response units, needed across the County Districts</li> <li>• Funds for FCPS special education graduates’ employment and day support</li> </ul>	

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-county, shared support of human service and school system planning for the young’s priority mental health and substance abuse needs. Nexus enthusiastically supports collaboration among County schools and services.</li> <li>• Opportunity Neighborhoods</li> <li>• Care management for older adults, who often care for the young</li> <li>• Integrated mental and physical health services, including dental</li> <li>• School readiness</li> <li>• SACC capacity</li> <li>• Housing Blueprint jeopardy and 10-year plan goals</li> <li>• Employment services supporting the Blueprint</li> <li>• By integrating employment services into the existing Bridging Affordability framework</li> <li>• Community Transformation, a prevention program for which federal funding will be soon discontinued</li> <li>• Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC), a public/private partnership that provides comprehensive services and coordinated access</li> <li>• Family Services and the CHCN</li> <li>• Respite and companion services</li> <li>• Support for partnerships who fill the gaps for services for the youngest needy e.g. Brain Injury Services, Partnerships for Youth and United Community Ministries</li> </ul> <p>Families in Need:                      More than 172,000 (15.6% of the County residents) are living on income under 200% of poverty (\$44,100 for a family of four). In our schools now, approximately 22% of graduating high school seniors and 33% of kindergartners live in poverty, many here in Mount Vernon and Lee Districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately one out of six school-age teenagers have seriously considered suicide in the past year.</li> </ul> <p>This translates to about 6,880 youth in those grade levels; and,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 132,000 (12.2%) of County residents do not have health insurance.</li> </ul>	

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>The sharp increase in human services needs have adverse impacts County-wide on our schools, public safety and the courts, the County’s human services agencies, and on our community partners just as human services delivery system have been hard-hit by Federal budget cuts and sequestration. Simultaneously, our long-standing nonprofit services like United Community Ministries have experienced marked declines in private charitable support, restricting their ability to respond to the increased service demands.</p> <p>We advocate for full funding for schools and for CSB’s, DFS, FCPS and Law Enforcement efforts to serve our community’s needy – particularly those service areas for families, children and the young, in accord with VACSB continuum of care goals, based on best practices.</p> <p>Looking-Forward Funding – such as:                      Building capacity through savings and investment for future need through penny-added to respond adequately to Virginia’s health care and Medicaid Reform environment, coordinated care requirements and building capacity to serve existing and new populations with severe behavioral health conditions, co-occurring medical conditions, and developmental needs that are/would be un-served, under-served or uninsured.</p> <p>We know that you support FCPS and rightly so; we do not agree with contests for funding that ultimately jeopardizes all services for families and the young; the care of the young and their families directly effects school performance and so, we urge you to support services for mental or physical health and services that prevent illness and build resiliency.</p> <p>We urge more attention to programs that benefit the community but bring in revenues as well – such as SACC or sliding scale user fees for services. We urge revenue growth through a meals tax (referendum next fall) developing or increasing other income streams – and, with some thought to the diversity of income levels in this County, for example, could there be higher greens fees, hunting license fees, or other user fees?</p>	

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
72	<b>TAX RELIEF</b>	<p>If real estate taxes rise either due to higher assessments or rate increases, a number of residents will likely need to obtain some type of help from human services and thus add to the county's budget needs. Also, adding tax burdens takes money out of what residents would spend on products and services that would create consumer demand in the local economy that can help to create jobs. In other words, before taxes are raised further, the county needs to analyze the unintended consequences.</p> <p>The county also needs to look at something other than a one size fits all tax burden. For example, should the tax rate be different for homes owned by and lived in by residents for more than 15 years, for example? If a home has only been lived in for a shorter time, it is likely that those residents are incurring a larger burden on the county, due, for example, to the greater likelihood of having school age children. Or adjust the tax rate based on earned income, which may correlate better with ability to pay.</p>	3-27-14
73	<b>SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUTH</b>	<p>I attended your Budget presentation and also the BOS/SB meeting last week. I was pleased to hear about the \$1 million and three positions for Behavioral Health Services for Youth. I'm contacting you today to share new research about an approach to decrease the need for such services.</p> <p>This brand new study from the University of Minnesota (UMN) confirms earlier research about benefits from school bell schedules that align with student body clocks. It involves a large-scale multi-state study which demonstrates that later high school start times improve student grades and overall physical and mental health.</p> <p>"The three-year project, using data from more than 9,000 students attending eight high schools in three states, found that, when switching to a later start time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attendance, standardized test scores and academic performance in math, English, science and social studies improved.</li> <li>• symptoms of depression, substance abuse, tardiness, and consumption of caffeinated drinks decreased."</li> </ul>	3-26-14

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>In addition, there was a 70% drop in teen car crashes at a high school in Wyoming, which shifted their start time to 8:55 a.m. Two Virginia studies comparing neighboring districts also have shown decreases in car crash rates for teens with later morning start times.</p> <p>Press release from UMN: <a href="http://www1.umn.edu/news/news-releases/2014/UR_CONTENT_473886.html#.UyBuErYk7OI">http://www1.umn.edu/news/news-releases/2014/UR_CONTENT_473886.html#.UyBuErYk7OI</a>.email</p> <p>Fairfax high school buses begin picking up students at 5:45 a.m. (that is not a typo). Most students are picked up between 6 and 6:30 a.m. with drop-offs at 6:45-7:00 for a 7:20 start. Because it will benefit the health, well-being, and safety of high school students, the school board has set a goal to start high schools after 8:00 a.m.</p> <p>Later school start times are also supported by the health community: the Northern Virginia Clinical Psychologists, Medical Society of Northern Virginia, Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, FCPS School Health Advisory Committee, Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition (9-5-2-1-0), and 70+ area pediatric practices, pediatricians, pediatric psychiatrists, other health professionals.</p> <p>Mental health is so fragile and inadequate sleep is linked to increased rates of depression and suicidal thoughts. As we deal with our sixth suicide at my area high school, W.T. Woodson, I am convinced more than ever that we need to try to address as many risk factors as possible to save our youth. I know you share my concern. The Fairfax County Youth Survey shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 in 4 Fairfax teens suffers from symptoms of depression.</li> <li>• 2 in 3 Fairfax teens are severely sleep deprived (lose 2 or more hours of sleep every school night).</li> </ul>	

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>Biological changes in sleep and circadian rhythms occur during puberty, resulting in naturally occurring delays in fall asleep and wake times. This means that it's almost impossible for teenagers to fall asleep much before 10 or 11 pm and they are biologically programmed to wake at about 8 am. These children would need to be in bed and asleep by 8:30 or 9:00 pm in order to attain the 9.25 hours of sleep recommended by most medical experts. This is just not realistic and the evidence shows we can improve student outcomes by changing the bell times.</p>	
74	<b>Do Not Increase SACC Fees</b>	<p>I have a child in the Clermont Elementary School SACC program and am the Clermont ES SACC PAC representative. I have forwarded to the Clermont SACC families information regarding Supervisor Herrity's budget proposal with regards to the SACC program. The response has been one of great concern. Many are upset and distressed regarding the potential increase in fees of over \$1,200 per year, a 32% increase over the 2013-1014 school year rate, and a 63% increase, for my family in particular, since we joined SACC at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. Several parents stated they have been considering moving out of the County due to the high taxes, and have called this increase an additional "tax" they just can't afford. Others have stated they would end up working just to pay for child care. It would make better financial sense for them to quit their job to be home with their children, or, again, move out of the County.</p> <p>Do you understand that the SACC program is actually keeping tax payers in the County, and employed? If there is a mass exodus of the SACC program due to the proposed increase in fees, the County loses the tax revenue as families relocate to other Counties or quit their jobs because it is no longer a financially viable option for their family to remain in Fairfax County. There is no guarantee that those families currently on the waiting lists will be able to afford these new rates any better than those currently in the program, or that those on the waiting list are families with adjusted household incomes of more than \$52,000. As families currently paying the full fee leave the program, there is no guarantee that the families that replace them will be of the same income bracket. As the inevitable churn takes place, there is no guarantee that the entire cost at the proposed increase will be able to continue to cover the entire SACC program costs. Rates will be raised again, and more families will leave the program. This will continue to occur with every fee increase until the SACC program is no longer viable or sustainable. A vote for this proposal is a vote to kill the SACC program. It may not happen overnight, but it WILL happen.</p>	4-18-2014

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
		<p>SACC is important to the working families in Fairfax County. It is a quality program that has a positive impact on children’s development. It must be kept affordable for ALL Fairfax County families. Just because a family makes \$250K does not mean they can easily absorb this proposed fee increase any easier than those families paying reduced fees, especially if they have multiple children in the program. The real estate tax in this County, plus the economy over the last several years, and the sequestration that some families are still trying to recover from, preclude a lot of families from being able to afford this fee increase. This proposal would harm SACC and make it unsustainable in the long term. Please know that the SACC families are concerned, they are watching, and they will be voting in the next election.</p> <p>Thank you for your continued support of the SACC program.</p>	
75	<b>Do Not Increase SACC Fees</b>	<p>I have a child in the Sunrise Valley SACC program. I urge the Board of Supervisors to continue the County’s support of the SACC program at the current funding level. This program has touched so many families across the county. It is a successful program that deftly balances costs by charging most family the full cost and helping low income families—the county offers a full-service program and gets to re-coup 4 of every 5 dollars spent. The proposal put forward by Mr. Herrity would ruin that balance. If higher income families are spending \$150-\$400 more a month (depending on how many children they have in the program), they will go elsewhere, and the county will not have enough high income families to keep the service available for the low income families. Why on earth would the county take a healthy, affordable program and break it? That is an example of a textbook bad budget decision. A broken program will do no one any good.</p> <p>Please remember:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SACC is important to working families in Fairfax County</li> <li>2. SACC is a quality program that has a positive impact on children's development</li> <li>3. SACC must be kept affordable for ALL families—not just the lowest income families</li> <li>4. Mr. Herrity’s proposal would harm SACC and we are afraid it would make it unsustainable in the long term.</li> </ol>	4-18-2014

<i>Number</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>E-Mail Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
76	<b>Do Not Cut Funding for Visitor Centers</b>	I strongly urge you to not cut the funding for the four visitor centers are Lake Accotink, Lake Fairfax, Burke Lake, and Riverbend. As an outdoorsy person, a father, and a resident of the county I go to all of these parks, and the Visitor Centers are places that I always go to and are a highlight for my daughter and her friends. The proposed cut is less the 1/10th of 1% of the entire budget. Obviously this is not a cut being proposed to actually save money. Please be mindful of your constituent and make smart, responsible, effective decisions. Do not make tiny useless cuts (including jobs) just to seem as though you are making progress.	4-17-2014





**MCA Resolution on County Advertised FY 2015 Budget Plan**  
April 2, 2014

**Whereas**, Fairfax County has advertised a budget plan for FY 2015 (Advertised Budget Plan) that includes General Fund disbursements of \$3.704 Billion; and

**Whereas**, the Advertised Budget Plan disbursements are divided between County-managed programs/services and the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS); and

**Whereas**, under the Advertised Budget Plan, \$1.776 Billion would be disbursed to the County for County services and personnel (County budget) and \$1.928 Billion would be transferred to FCPS for FCPS services and personnel (FCPS budget); and

**Whereas**, the transfer to FCPS represents 52.1% of total revenues projected in the FY2015 Advertised Budget Plan; and

**Whereas**, to fund County and FCPS programs and personnel and meet reserve requirements, Fairfax County is projecting FY 2015 General Fund receipts of \$3.708 Billion, including an increase in real-estate tax-derived revenues of \$148.16 Million; and

**Whereas**, 63.2% of the projected receipts are derived from revenue received from payment of real estate taxes; 15.6% are derived from personal property taxes; 13.5% are derived from local taxes, including local sales taxes; 2.6% are derived from transfers from the Commonwealth; 2.1% are derived from charges for services; and the remaining 3% are derived from other sources; and

**Whereas**, the Advertised Fairfax County budget assumes no change in the real estate tax rate of \$1.085 per \$100 of assessed value for residential and commercial real estate; and

**Whereas**, to preserve its options to increase revenues, the Board of Supervisors has advertised a real estate tax rate of \$ 1.105 per \$100 of assessed value, which if fully implemented would represent a 2 cent increase in the real estate tax rate; and

**Whereas**, the assessed value of residential real estate in the County has increased an average of 6.54% and is estimated to increase by about 5.50% in FY 2016, while the assessed value of nonresidential real estate has declined by 0.10% and is not estimated to increase in FY 2016; and

**Whereas**, residential properties represent approximately 75.3% of the real estate tax base while commercial/industrial properties represent approximately 19.01% of the total real estate assessment base; and

**Whereas**, according to the County Executive, the increase in assessed value means that a typical Fairfax County homeowner (i.e., one whose home has been assessed as worth \$497,962) would pay \$331.67 more in FY 2015 than in FY 2014 in residential real estate taxes at the current real estate tax rate, and

**Whereas**, this typical homeowner's tax bill would increase by an additional \$50 if the real estate tax rate were increased by 1 cent and by an additional \$100 if the rate were increased by 2 cents, resulting in an overall real estate tax increase of \$381 or \$431, respectively, from the FY 2014 tax bill; and

**Whereas**, the typical Fairfax County homeowner also is facing increased water/sewer and stormwater management taxes, which together would add approximately \$25 to the typical homeowner's annual tax bill, as well as increases in County user fees and state-mandated local sales taxes for transportation improvements; and

**Whereas**, the Advertised Budget Plan is premised upon four financial management principles/themes:

1. Use only recurring resources for recurring requirements and do not, as in the past, use non-recurring resources to provide funding for recurring requirements;
2. Address requirements for investment and economic development;
3. Identify increases in County reserves necessary to retain the County's AAA bond rating and meet managed reserve requirements; and
4. Strengthen long-term pension funding by increasing funding in FY 2015 and FY 2016; and

**Whereas**, the FY 2014 Approved Budget reduced funding for certain County programs, including libraries, parks and human services, in order to provide more adequate funding for what were deemed to be more pressing County and FCPS needs while keeping the tax rate level; and

**Whereas**, the County Executive proposes in 2015 to increase funding for such programs and has stated that the goal of the Advertised Budget is to preserve and enhance services and programs, including strong schools, safe communities, the safety net for those in need and the quality of life in Fairfax County; and

**Whereas**, according the County Executive, the Advertised Budget establishes a core service level, below which core services would be impacted; and

**Whereas**, the FY 2015 Advertised Budget is \$118.02 Million, or 3.29%, above the FY 2014 Adopted Budget Plan; and

**Whereas**, the revenues allocated to County-provided services and personnel are divided among eleven functions, as follows:

1. Public Safety (12%);
2. Health and Welfare (11%);
3. Non-Departmental services (8.5%);
4. Transfers, including to County transit, capital, metro and information technology services, and others (4.5%);
5. County Debt (3.6%);
6. Central services, such as information technology and tax administration (2.0%);
7. Public works, including facilities management (1.9%);
8. Parks and libraries (1.4%)
9. Community Development, including land development services, planning and zoning and transportation ((1.3%);
10. Judicial administration (0.9%); and
11. Legislative-Executive functions (0.8%]; and

**Whereas**, included in the above-mentioned County-provided services and activities is funding for \$72.6 Million in school-based programs and activities, such as Head Start, School Health, School Resource Officers, School Crossing Guards, after-school programming, field maintenance and recreational programs; and

**Whereas**, the County Executive has stated that the Advertised Budget would, inter alia:

1. Provide a 1.29% market rate adjustment salary increase for all employees who are paid through revenues allocated to County-provided services and personnel; these County employees did not receive a salary increase in FY 2014;
2. Provide additional public safety pay increases for fire and rescue staff, and 15- or 20-year public longevity salary increases for eligible employees;
3. Increase user fees for EMS transport, School-Age Child Care, Animal Shelter adoption and boarding fees, and use of County-maintained athletic fields
4. Provide for 58 new positions, including 8 in Public Safety, 13 in Human Services, and 20 in Community Development, while reducing 45 positions as part of a School-Age Child Care staffing alignment, for a net increase of 13 positions; and
5. Eliminate a previously-required \$23.54 M General Fund transfer to E-911 service since Communication Sales and Use Tax revenues will cover this service starting in FY 2015; and

**Whereas**, the County Executive has stated that the net additional resources available to the County in the Advertised Budget would be allocated, as follows:

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. FCPS Operating Budget and Debt Service | \$39.11 M |
| 2. Capital Construction and Debt Service  | \$29.93 M |

3. Pay and Benefits for County employees	\$29.54 M
4. Public Safety	\$14.23 M
5. Cost of County Operations	\$12.33 M
6. Human Services	\$ 8.50 M
7. New Facilities	\$ 4.03 M
8. Community Development	\$ 4.00 M
9. Net Adjustments to Managed Reserve	\$ 3.77 M; and

**Whereas**, the County Executive initially estimated that there would be an available balance of \$10.64 Million at the end of FY 2015 under the Advertised Budget Plan, but recently indicated that this figure likely would be as much as \$6 Million less due to an adjustment downward in FY 2015 Personal Property tax revenues, based on new information from the National Automotive Dealers Association; and

**Whereas**, in every year since 2007, County revenues have been underestimated and/or expenditures overestimated when the approved budgets are compared to actual revenues and expenditures after the close of the fiscal year; and

**Whereas**, in the last four fiscal years (FY 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013), this has meant that, at the close of the fiscal year, the County has identified a “Total of Additional Revenues Realized Plus Funds Not Expended As Anticipated” of \$84M, \$89M, \$67 M, and \$59 M, respectively (hereinafter called “approved but unspent and available” funds); and

**Whereas**, the County may again have “approved but unspent and available” funds available at the end of the fiscal year; and

**Whereas**, on February 6, 2014, the Fairfax County School Board requested an operating transfer of \$1.82 Billion, which is \$98.1 Million above the transfer received in FY 2014 and \$63.8 Million above the transfer that has been proposed by the County Executive for FY 2015; and

**Whereas**, the requested FCPS transfer represents a 5.7% increase over the transfer provided for school operations in the FY 2014 Adopted Budget Plan, and 3.7% more than the County Executive had advised FCPS to expect to receive for operating expenses; and

**Whereas**, FCPS has stated that the additional \$98.1 Million is “to fund uncontrollable costs (retirement rates and enrollment and demographics) and address the structural deficit resulting from a shortfall in one-time funding available to pay for recurring expenses”; and

**Whereas**, from FY 2009 to FY 2014, FCPS student enrollment has increased 8.9% overall while the County transfer of funds to FCPS has increased by 5.6% overall; and

**Whereas**, the increase in enrollment of students requiring additional services (Special Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, and Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Means) has outpaced that of general education enrollment; and

**Whereas**, the School Board's Advertised Budget Request would, inter alia:

1. Provide FCPS employees with a 2.5% average salary increase in FY 2015; this additional raise, on top of the 2% raise in FY 2014, would improve the competitiveness of FCPS vis-à-vis surrounding jurisdictions;
2. Add positions to address increases in enrollment from FY 2014;
3. Reduce the central support budget by 6%, school support by 3%, and classroom support by 2%, and eliminate an associated 731.2 positions;
4. Implement changes in the class size formulas that will result in increases of 0.5 students per class in elementary and middle schools and 1.0 students per class in high schools, while adding 20 positions to the staffing reserve to address larger class sizes at targeted schools; and
5. Add user fees for AP and IB exams and increase user fees for community use of FCPS facilities; and

**Whereas**, the Virginia Legislature and Governor have committed to increasing state funding for Fairfax County schools by roughly \$28-32 Million, with the final amount to be determined in the state budget; and

**Whereas**, if this additional state funding were applied to closing the "gap" between the advertised County transfer and the FCPS proposed budget, the "gap" would be roughly \$32-36M; and

**Whereas**, in every year since 2007, School Operating Fund revenues have been underestimated and/or expenditures overestimated when the approved budgets are compared to actual revenues and expenditures after the close of the fiscal year; and

**Whereas**, in the last four fiscal years (FY 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013), this has meant that, at the close of the fiscal year, FCPS has identified \$100M, \$76M, \$43 M, and \$56 M, respectively, of "approved but unspent and available" funds to the FCPS; and

**Whereas**, in prior years, the FCPS has used these "approved but unspent and available" funds for a number of purposes, including indirectly closing any gaps between the Approved County transfer and the FCPS Advertised Budget; and

**Whereas**, FCPS is expected again to have "approved but unspent and available" funds available at the end of the fiscal year due to a variety of factors, including higher actual than estimated personnel attrition rates and overestimation of expenditures and underestimation of revenues in its budget documents; and

**Whereas**, alternatively or additionally, revision of the assumptions underpinning the FCPS estimation of expected FY 2015 revenues and expenditures, and hence of the estimates, to reflect the historical trend of overestimating expenditures and underestimating revenues also could be used to reduce the gap between the FCPS budget request and the County proposed transfer to FCPS; and

**Whereas**, however, the School Board and FCPS have publicly stated that they would not apply the increase in state funding to help close the gap between the FCPS budget request and the transfer proposed in the County Advertised Budget Plan, but would instead use the additional state funding to undo four initiatives that had been approved as part of the Advertised Budget, specifically:

1. User fees for AP and IB tests;
2. The 0.5 pupil increase in elementary school class size;
3. The one-fourth reduction in needs-based staffing and
4. The reduction in small school staffing reserves; and

**Whereas**, in an ideal world, with a more healthy local economy, or if such restorations could be accomplished without impacting County-provided services and personnel or the real estate tax rate, the McLean Citizens Association would support such restorations; and

**Whereas**, the reality is that the economic recovery is anemic; and

**Whereas**, there continues to be uncertainty regarding federal spending and, according to County Executive Long, most recent projections reflect a weakening of a number of categories which may impact expected FY 2015 revenues; and

**Whereas**, while some data has suggested a 2% increase in average wages in the County in FY 2014, many County taxpayers have had stagnant incomes, those who work for the Federal Government saw only a 1% pay increase, and many people employed by government contractors even lost their jobs or otherwise saw their incomes decline with the cut-backs in the growth of federal spending; and

**Whereas**, for many Fairfax County households, the effect of the 6.54% average increase in home assessments plus additional taxes and fees identified above constitutes a net decrease in household disposable income; and

**Whereas**, a 1-2% increase in the real estate tax rate will affect household disposable incomes and is likely especially to increase the financial burden faced by any family in the County that is struggling to get by and continue living in the County; and

**Whereas**, while applauding the initial steps taken in FY 2014 to eliminate structural imbalances and address, define and fund fair and sustainable pay, benefit and retirement systems, the MCA remains concerned.

**Now, therefore, be it resolved that** MCA urges the Board of Supervisors to strive for an equitable balance between funding for services that are provided directly by Fairfax County and those that are provided by the Fairfax County Public Schools; and

**Be it further resolved that** MCA urges the Board of Supervisors, in light of all the factors discussed above, to keep the real estate tax rate at \$1.085 per \$100 of assessed value; and

**Be it further resolved that** MCA urges the Board of Supervisors to direct its independent Auditor to critically review the underlying documentation for the School Board as well as the County Executive's funding request, if not for this year, then for 2016, to identify budgeting estimates and assumptions, such as for attrition rates and estimated revenues and expenditures, that should be questioned and hence, areas where economies can be realized. The MCA also urges the Board of Supervisors to seek state legislation to authorize it to address these aspects of the school system transfer request, if it deems that it needs such legislative authority; and

**Be it further resolved that** MCA urges the Board of Supervisors to scrutinize critically the County Executive's FY 2015 and FY 2016 Possible Budget Reductions List, dated March 18, 2014, with the goals of (1) removing from that list those items that would reduce or eliminate direct impact human services delivery to disabled, elderly or disadvantaged individuals; eliminate personnel positions at Fairfax County parks; or reduce library operations and acquisitions; and (2) identifying alternate means to achieve savings; and

**Be it further resolved that** MCA urges the FCPS and School Board to revisit the Superintendent's list of additional possible reductions, contained within the Superintendent's Menus of Discussion Considerations for FY 2015, dated October and November 2013.

*Approved by the MCA Board of Directors  
April 2, 2014*

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McLean Citizens Association, P.O. Box 273, McLean, Virginia 22102

cc: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor  
Fairfax County Executive Edward Long  
Fairfax County School Board  
Dranesville School Board Member Jane Strauss  
Fairfax County School Superintendent Karen Garza

Resolution  
on the  
Fairfax County Advertised Fiscal Year 2015 Budget

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## INTRODUCTION

The following resolution was adopted by the Federation Membership on March 27, 2014. The final resolution will be submitted to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Rob Jackson, President  
Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations  
April 2014

## I. RESOLUTIONS

### *A. EDUCATION/FCPS TRANSFER*

#### **Education Resolution**

**Whereas**, approval of the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) advertised FY 2015 budget would result in a county transfer increase of about 5.7%, and the County Executive has proposed an increase in the county transfer to FCPS of about 2.0% for a difference of about \$64 million and FCPS represents about 52% of the proposed County budget; and

**Whereas**, based on the current tax rate, in the County Executive's proposed budget the projected increase in revenue for Fairfax County is about \$145 million;

**Whereas**, since FY 2009 the county's transfer to FCPS has grown at only a 1.1% compound annual growth rate whereas the general county fund has grown at a 1.4% growth rate; and

**Whereas**, over the last several years FCPS has increased class size twice, substantially reduced summer school, and salaries have stagnated with our maximum teacher salary now ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 10 Washington area school districts—10 being lowest, not the highest; and

**Whereas**, between FY 2009 and FY 2014 FCPS student population has increased about 15,000 (compound annual growth rate of 1.9%) with about 3,000 more students expected for FY 2015, and certain populations that require more expensive services have grown at an even faster rate, such as, students who receive free and reduced price lunches and ESOL students; and

**Whereas**, Fairfax County is one of the wealthiest counties in the U.S. and school bonds routinely pass overwhelmingly.

#### **THEREFORE BE IT**

**Resolved**, the Federation requests the Board of Supervisors provide FCPS with a fair share of available funds which should be a county transfer increase to FCPS of 50% of the FY 2015 projected increase in revenue for Fairfax County.

## **B. LIBRARIES**

### **Libraries Resolution**

**Whereas**, the Fairfax County Public Libraries are centers for self-directed education for all ages and provide skilled research assistance and instruction for individuals and groups, and

**Whereas**, the Library Budget has been cut from \$34 million in 2007 to \$27 million in 2013 during the same time that two new branch libraries were opened and at the same time population and cost of living were increased, and

**Whereas**, the per capita Materials Budget has decreased from \$6.33 in FY 2000 to \$2.11 in FY 2013, and

**Whereas**, Fairfax County Public Library has 45-50 vacant positions,

**Whereas**, the size of the Library collection fluctuated as books were regularly added to and culled from the collection, there was a net loss of over 400,000 books between 2006 and January 2014, and

**Whereas**, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted November 19, 2013 an increase of \$1M as a consideration item to the FY 2015 Library Budget for non-fiction materials, and the Library Board of Trustees Budget Committee voted February 3, 2014 to increase the library budget by \$2M to include \$1 M for Materials budget and \$1 M for other items including continuing education for librarians, and

**Whereas**, the Fairfax County Public Library is crucial to the future of the county as an economic powerhouse.

#### **THEREFORE BE IT**

**Resolved**, that the Federation calls for a \$2.0 million increase in the FY2015 budget to: conduct a strategic plan, increase of the materials budget to restore depleted collections, fill vacant staff positions, broaden the function of the library to support literacy for children and adults, increase technical resources and library support for new businesses as strategies for furthering economic development in the county.

## **C. DEBT MANAGEMENT**

### **Debt Management Resolution**

**Whereas**, Fairfax County has maintained a Aaa rating from Moody's Investors Service since 1975, a AAA rating from Standard & Poor's since 1978 and a AAA rating from Fitch Ratings since 1997, and

**Whereas**, as of January 2014, Fairfax County is only one of nine states, 39 counties, and 33 cities to hold a Triple-A rating from all three rating agencies, and

**Whereas**, the county's 10% debt ratio (debt service expenditures, as a percentage of Combined General Fund disbursements) is consistent with its surrounding and stable rated counties including Montgomery, Loudoun, Arlington and Prince William, and

**Whereas**, the county has continued to fund its pension system based on actuarial estimates and in accordance with county code and has increased its pension funding in recent years to offset weak market returns, and

**Whereas**, Fairfax County has been able to maintain its triple-A bond rating throughout many economic downturns and Federal Government budget reductions over the past 36 years by following its sound financial management practices.

**THEREFORE BE IT**

**Resolved**, that the Federation recommends that the county continue to adhere to its sound financial management policies and practices, including matching recurring requirements with sustainable and recurring sources of revenue, and if necessary defer or eliminate any new debt issuance that might place the county's strong debt rating and healthy financial condition at risk.

**Resolved**, that the county be mindful and aware of its pension and other long-term obligations and closely monitor the effects of sequestration and other Federal Government budget reductions on the county's economy.

**Resolved**, that the County include Economic Development Authority debt service in the FY2015 and future budgets.

## ***D. PENSION FUND***

### **Pension Fund Resolution**

**Whereas**, people live much longer than they did when the county retirement system was instituted (life expectancy is now 83, as compared to 70 not many years ago); and

**Whereas**, county employees are eligible for retirement at an far earlier age than in the private sector; and

**Whereas**, county employees are usually able to work and actually do work after retirement from the county; and

**Whereas**, the long-term liability of the pension fund is great.

## **THEREFORE BE IT**

**Resolved**, that the county appoint a blue ribbon commission to study the effect of increasing the retirement age on the near- and long-term pension costs and the impact on staffing.

## **II. REVENUES**

### **Revenues Resolution**

**Whereas**, real estate values have increased on average 6.54% during the recent equalization process, meaning that maintaining the property tax rate of \$1.085 per \$100 would still generate about \$2.3B in revenue and increase the cost for the average homeowner of roughly \$333 per year; and

**Whereas**, county residents' income has increased only 2.1%; and

**Whereas**, tax payments are paid from income rather than home value; and

**Whereas**, the effects of the comprehensive State Transportation Act contains significant tax increases on sales, wholesale gasoline/diesel, property transfers, and other taxes.

**Whereas**, the rising additional fees that directly affect homeowners (stormwater fee, waste disposal, etc.) further increase the "tax burden" on homeowners.

**Whereas**, the Board of Supervisors has the authority to adopt a zoning ordinance to assess and impose transportation impact fees on any development needing a building permit, the collected impact fees to be used to pay all or part of the costs of reasonable road improvement, and that new transportation revenues collected from fuel taxes be used to alleviate congestion on county roads.

## **THEREFORE BE IT**

**Resolved**, the Federation endorses maintaining a tax rate of \$1.085 per \$100 of assessed valuation, and urges that the Board of Supervisors work to accommodate recommended program funding for Schools and libraries as described above.

**Resolved**, the Federation urges the Board of Supervisors to look at all possible sources of revenue (within its authority).including but not limited to meals tax, BPOL, increasing residential permitting fees, SACC fees, etc.

**Resolved**, the Federation recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt a zoning ordinance to assess and impose transportation impact fees on any development needing a building permit, the collected impact fees to be used to pay all or part of the costs of reasonable road improvement, and that new transportation revenues collected from fuel taxes be used to alleviate congestion on county roads.

**Resolved**, the Federation recommends the Board of Supervisors obtain the equivalent of one penny or \$20M from other revenue sources.

### III. BUDGET PROCESS

#### Resolution on County Budget Process

**Whereas**, there are no fewer than 86 Fairfax County boards, authorities and commissions, and 10 citizen advisory groups to the FCPS, all of which are advocacy groups for everything from trees to pets and child care to the elderly, none address a balanced, thorough analysis and prioritization of expenditures and revenue sources of the Fairfax County and Public Schools' budgets; and

**Whereas**, the ongoing financial situation creates counterproductive competition among vital programs, making carefully tailored cuts especially problematic; and

**Whereas**, a few of the District Supervisors have their own advisory committees on the county budget, whose chairs meet irregularly to exchange ideas; and

**Whereas**, community input must not only be broad, but also be informed by a depth of knowledge that effectively employs the diverse expertise of those who live and work in Fairfax County; and

**Whereas**, the Advertised Property Tax Rate for FY2015 had to be set just one week after the County Executive released his FY2015 Advertised Budget; and

**Whereas**, the county's increasing participation in public-private partnerships, including the Tysons transit and other community redevelopments, may expose taxpayers to open-ended financial risks without adequate public discussion; and

**Whereas**, the Advertised Budget was released on February 25, 2014, and the public hearings on the budget are scheduled to begin 41 days later, on April 8; and

**Whereas**, the most recent edition of the county's *Performance Measurement Matters* newsletter is dated Fall 2008; and

**Whereas**, the County and FCPS already develop a 5 year staffing plan and budget outlooks; and

**Whereas**, while the "performance" of most departments and agencies are reported in the county's proposed budget under the heading of Performance Measurement Results, many county offices report activities, such as attending meetings and preparing reports rather than citing work accomplishments/results; and

**Whereas**, both the county government and schools provide many non-mandated programs that should be reviewed for effectiveness, especially during economic downturns; and

**Whereas**, the Commonwealth's Transportation Plan imposes significant sales tax increases, wholesale gas taxes, and increased fees on property transfers; and

**Whereas**, Fairfax County has an obligation to ensure the most efficient use of tax dollars at a time of continuing shortfalls, to minimize damage to essential county and schools programs, and to limit the burden on county taxpayers.

## **THEREFORE BE IT**

**Resolved**, the Federation praises the county's extensive series of public meetings to solicit community input on spending priorities, and urges that such meetings be continued in future years.

**Resolved**, the Federation strongly urges that the processes/calendar for county residents' informed input to the budget decision-making process allow at least 60 days between release of the Advertised Budget and the public testimony on the budget.

**Resolved**, the Federation strongly advocates for year-round review of the budget by a citizens' advisory committee to the Board of Supervisors, comprised of members whose focus is not advocacy of specific causes but a balanced, in-depth analysis and prioritization of expenditures and revenue sources for Fairfax County government and Public Schools' budgets.

**Resolved**, the Federation urges all District supervisors to appoint budget advisory committees, and at the very least appoint a chairman who can participate in countywide meetings with other district budget committee chairs.

**Resolved**, the Federation urges the County to publish 5-year budget goals.

**Resolved**, the Federation recommends that the county establish an inventory of all public-private partnerships that may expose taxpayers to unexpected budget obligations, and establish a process that ensures broad public discussion of any partnership that may entail hidden risks for taxpayers.

**Resolved**, the Federation requests that all Performance Measurement results in departmental budgets and Lines of Business documents, the latter of which needs to be updated, be reported in terms of accomplishments/results.

## **SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS**

Community of Solutions

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### **SUMMARY:**

**Funding support for programs that address teen mental health and substance abuse within FCPS and within the broader community are needed now more than ever.**

- **Behavioral Health Services for Youth**
- **Integrated Prevention Services -**
- **Community Services Board CSB Youth Services Division Resource Plan**
- **CrisisLink and Fairfax County Partnership for Youth**

**FCPS needs funds for *new* initiatives in student services,**

- **to implement late start times,**
- **mindfulness instruction,**
- **training for teens and parents in mental health first aid,**
- **to expand depression screening, and**
- **at a minimum, sustained staffing levels.**

### **TESTIMONY BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FY2015BUDGET HEARING**

Good afternoon, I'm Bob Phillips, representing the Community of Solutions. We are an ad hoc group of parents and teens that formed nearly a year ago after a string of suicides in the Woodson Community. Starting in May 2013, twenty-five of us began meeting at the Mantua Swim and Tennis Club. Our focus is to find solutions that can help teens deal with adversity and build resilience. We focus on identifying high-priority needs and forming small work groups to work on them. Since then, our group has grown to 150 participants. We are here today to tell you a little more about our concerns, what we have been doing, and to ask for your on-going financial support for programs that address adolescent mental health and substance abuse.

## **SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS**

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As you are likely aware, we have had a series of tragic losses, across our county, but particularly at W. T. Woodson HS. Since January 2011, our school has lost six students unexpectedly. We know this problem is even larger—10%/20% of boys/girls admit to suicidal thoughts and 3%/5% make attempts. We also know that substance abuse contributes to the mental health issues facing teens, increasing the odds that they will try and succeed with suicide. We recognize that we are a community in crisis and are working very hard to find and build solutions within the community.

As parents, we are trying to understand how are we failing to support teens and how can we help them. We don't want to lose any more of our children. We know that this is a public health crisis and that it needs to stop now.

Through our meetings, website, and especially through our facebook forum, we have been gathering information at an explosive rate. There is an incredible sense of urgency among our group members. We have been building relationships with FCPS, and other groups and agencies that play a role in addressing adolescent mental health and substance abuse issues. Many of these organizations have joined us at our meetings and have helped us better understand what resources are available and how to access them. We are still learning from these contacts and synthesizing this information.

What we have found so far is that, while there are lots of resources available, not a lot of families are aware of these resources. Also, some of the resources have limited capacity and/or are not located such that they are easily accessible to teens. We are looking for ways to help integrate these programs and deploy them in a more decentralized way, maybe even within schools.

I'd like to draw your attention to a handout that summarizes the action items we are working on.



## **SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS**

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Based on what our teens and parents are telling us, we are focusing on actions that can help with:

- Prevention – building resilience
- Crisis Intervention
- Sustained support for children facing adversity
- Building bridges in community and school to increase capacity for all three of the above

### **1. PREVENTION**

#### **Mindfulness-**

With regard to building resilience, we are very interested in the potential for Mindfulness to be taught within our schools. Mindfulness is a collection of techniques that can be taught to create better self-regulation through intentional self-awareness of the physical aspects of emotions. These techniques have been demonstrated to:

- Help improve focus, concentration, and academic performance
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Handle peer-to-peer conflicts
- Manage emotions and reactions
- Develop greater empathy toward others
- Choose optimism

At Walt Whitman high school in Bethesda, MD, mindfulness lessons are being taught within the English classes using nationally-recognized curricula, *Mindful Schools*, and *MindUp*. We think teens will benefit greatly from this program and that we should start piloting its use within FCPS immediately.

#### **Later School Start Times-**

We are very supportive of the School Board's initiative to change school schedule so teens can get more sleep. We believe this is critical for building resilience and supporting mental wellness. We hope the Board of Supervisors will do all that you can to support FCPS in making schedule changes at our high schools and that this can be started as early as next year, if possible.

**Homework Guidelines-**

We are working to better understand the pressures that students face with homework. Are they getting too much homework? Are they under too much pressure to take Advanced Placement tests? Are their schedules too full with other activities? Do the parents need to play a bigger role with helping their teens manage their time?

**Stress and the Student Athlete-**

Among the students who have died, most were involved in school sports, particularly football. We are beginning to work more closely with FCPS athletics. We want to help support a culture change that creates greater awareness of the whole athlete, both physical and mental, as a means of achieving wellness. We're focused on bringing in resources to increase monitoring, mentoring, modeling and mindfulness. For example we're working to bring in a sports psychologist who teaches and studies mindfulness as a tool for improving athletic performance—but which also has benefit for resilience generally.

2. **CRISIS INTERVENTION**

**Training for Teens: *Mental Health First Aid* -**

Community of Solutions was instrumental in getting a training program set up for teens to help them respond to peers in crisis. Since August 2013, over 50 teens in FCPS schools have participated in a class called Mental Health First Aid – a program of the Community Service Board. Those who participated felt it was beneficial. We think that there should be more opportunities to take this training, and that it should be offered at all FCPS high schools.

**Training for Parents: *Mental Health 101* -**

Parents may not realize that many mental health conditions present for the first time during the adolescent years. It's not on their radar and they don't recognize the symptoms. We think that every parent of an FCPS student would benefit from

## **SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS**

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participation in some sort of "Mental Health 101" training program, comparable to the HeadsUp! online training that is mandated by State law for parents of student athletes.

### **Focus on Front-line Health Providers -**

We want to make sure that our pediatricians and other health providers are paying adequate attention to mental health in their patients, and that doctors are routinely screening for depression, and addressing substance abuse. We are looking at how these practitioners can be better supported and better informed about community resources to treat and support teens struggling with mental health and substance abuse challenges. We see a role for FCPS and the Health Department to engage with the medical community, communicating with regard to trends and concerns they are observing in the student populations. We applaud the announcement that there will be an in-depth review by the Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control regarding the circumstances of the suicides to date, to determine if there are any systemic or common issues to be addressed. The Community of Solutions would be interested in having a representative participate in the scoping of this study.

### **One-Stop Crisis Support-**

At the moment a crisis hits, it is challenging for our families to know where to turn for help. We are beginning to look at how to pull together a "package" approach to serving families coping with a critical mental health and/or substance abuse crisis, some sort of integrated point of contact for helping Fairfax County residents find the resources they need from a reliable and knowledgeable source.

## **3. ONGOING SUPPORT FOR TEENS STRUGGLING WITH ADVERSITY**

### **Taking the Pulse-**

We have some research professional volunteers working to help assess how are teens are feeling right now, so that we can listen and learn what it is that they feel they need to be happy and productive, successful.

## **SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS**

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### **On-campus Support Groups-**

Students having mental health and substance abuse issues need regular help and support. We think that these resources need to be available where the students can access them, at school. We want to explore how health services can be delivered by third-party providers on our school campuses.

### **BUDGET NEEDS**

**Funding support for programs that address teen mental health and substance abuse within FCPS and within the broader community are needed now more than ever.**

As a relatively new group and new to these issues, we are just beginning to learn about the county departments and programs that address these issues, so these are not going to be the most targeted recommendations. But, we can point to some of the following:

#### **Behavioral Health Services for Youth-**

We are interested in the new \$1,000,000 set aside within the Department of Family services to implement a Systems of Care model. We are not yet knowledgeable about what this plan is but it sounds promising.

#### **Integrated Prevention Services -**

We applaud the funding of a new Prevention Program and coordinator, to integrate youth wellness initiatives.

#### **Community Services Board CSB Youth Services Division Resource Plan-**

The CSB provides a critical satellite of services. These programs need to be adequately funded and expanded through the Consolidated Community Funding Pool. As recommended in the Youth Behavioral Health Services Report, we think that CSB needs to move forward with its comprehensive inventory and assessment efforts and create the recommended Youth Services Division Resource Plan, documenting what services

## **SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS**

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exist, what gaps exist and plan out how to meet future projected needs for these services.

### **CrisisLink and Fairfax County Partnership for Youth -**

These two organizations are supported with funding from the County. We would like to point out that they have been particularly responsive and helpful. We are thankful for their work and your on-going financial support of the critical role they are playing in our community.

We specifically ask for small but meaningful enhancement of funding for CrisisLink to increase their capacity for training crisis experts in the community and to create a texting function for students seeking help.

### **Fairfax County Public Schools-**

This is probably the worse time for cutting school service personnel. We are extremely concerned about the possible impact of proposed FCPS staffing cuts on student wellness and mental health. "School Administrators" are not superfluous to the education function in the classrooms. Principals and assistant principals support mental health wellness in many ways, and they routinely provide crisis intervention and support for students and families. School social workers, psychologists and counselors provide critical services in our schools. Cutting back on staffing in these areas may be penny-wise, but not prudent. Students in crisis can create crisis, as recent events in Pennsylvania and elsewhere tragically underscore. We should be expanding these positions, not cutting them.

FCPS needs funds for *new* initiatives in student services,

- to implement late start times,
- mindfulness instruction,
- training for teens and parents in mental health first aid,
- to expand depression screening, and
- at a minimum, sustained staffing levels.

## **SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS**

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Last year, the WT Woodson HS Class of 2013 was asked to complete the following sentence in an exit survey:

**"I would like the counseling department to provide informational programs on (check all that apply): "**

**41.5% (188 students) checked off "Suicide information/prevention."**

This may be a shocking statistic, but it is also *reassuring*.

Our teens need help and *they recognize the need to ask for it*.

We need to listen to our teens, respond as a community, and provide them the support that they need.

Thank you for your time, and support of these programs.

# Community of Solutions

**What we do?** Help teens deal with adversity and build resilience through idea and resource sharing in the community.

## Solutions / Actions...

- Listened to concerns of teens; facilitated teen discussions with school admin & counselors
- Instrumental in the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> FCPS offerings of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) class to 48 teens
- Awarded a PTSO grant to fund MHFA; partnering with the Josh Anderson Foundation to sustain
- Building positive relationships with the Community by focusing on what we have in common, building on our strengths & sharing resources

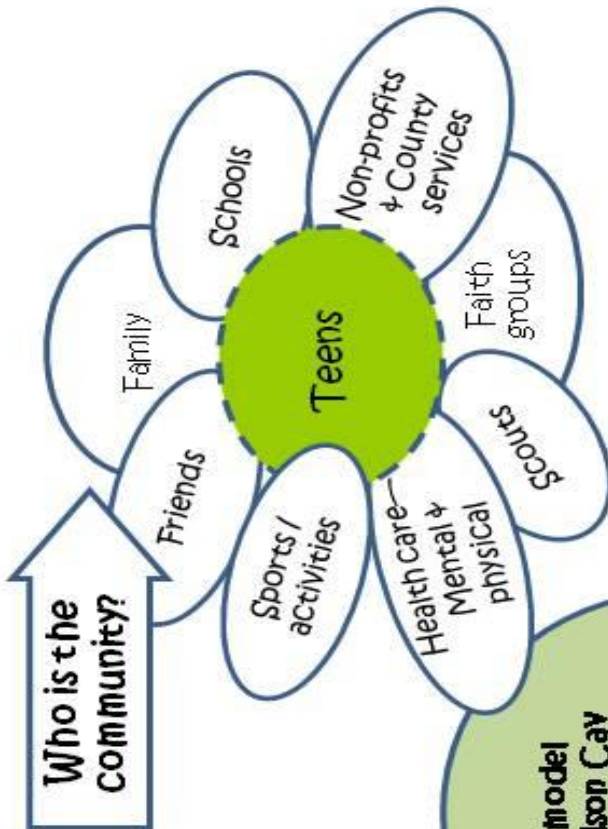
## MEETINGS

Wed, Apr 23, 7:00 to 9:00 pm, Truro Swim Club  
4146 Elizabeth Lane, Annandale

Watch segments of the documentary *Room to Breathe* about a school who implemented mindfulness; Break into work groups: 1. School culture—homework, AP & college pressure; Feelings/stigma—how are teens and adults feeling? 2. Teens create a peer to peer support group & non-judgmental adult support; 3. "911" Mental Health Package—where do you go, what do you do when you are near/in crisis? 4. Debrief

Mindfulness documentary

May 12, Location TBD, Continue with work groups



## We model Woodson CAY Culture Values

Proactive...Accountable...  
Empathetic...Respectful  
Connected

**What is next?** Create a package / resilience circles similar to the CDC concussion model so when a family and teens are near or in a mental health or substance abuse crisis they will have an easier time accessing resources & will be connected expediently so that no one falls through the cracks.

<http://com-sol.wix.com/communityofsolutions>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Communityofsolutions/>

Co-facilitators: Bob Phillips Rp27@georgetown.edu

Carol Davis Carol@InspiringMore.com

## What Actions are in Progress to Improve the Behavioral Health (BH) of Fairfax Youth? Fairfax County, Fairfax County Public Schools & the Community of Solutions

### Community-Based Prevention & Mental Health Promotion Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax/Access Team

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/livehealthly](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/livehealthly)

### Improving Access to Behavioral Health Services Youth Behavioral Health Services Work Group

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/health/human/scypt/meetings.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/living/health/human/scypt/meetings.htm)

1. Improve access to community outpatient services
2. Provide quality care that is free or at reduced rates to those in need
3. Link families to insurance through Medicaid or the health market
4. Help those w/ coverage to obtain available, quality care
5. Improve upon existing services & resources

1. Community Wide Suicide Prevention Agenda
2. Community awareness campaign to educate about mental illness, accessing help & reducing stigma
  - Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training
  - Other strategies included
3. Community based prevention
  - Resilience building
  - Behavioral health screenings
  - Guidance & support for community-based prevention providers
4. Trauma-informed care for practitioners & trauma awareness for the community

### Community & Stakeholder Engagement & Implementation

Community of Solutions (COS) [www.facebook.com/groups/CommunityofSolutions/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/CommunityofSolutions/)

Teens, parents & interested community members join together to help teens deal with adversity & build resilience through Facebook chats & community meetings to educate, facilitate work groups & create actions (actions in progress below)

- A. "911" Mental Health Package: Near or in crisis? Where do you go? What do you do? What if it's not working? How do you self-advocate? Treatment, insurance, school, etc. (supports the Work Group & Access Team actions above)
- B. Athletics Culture of Monitor, Mentor, Model & Mindfulness: How can community & sports teams monitor mental health; integrate sports psychology perspectives; create a culture using emotional intelligence & mindfulness that builds team & individual resilience? (supports the Access Team actions 1-4 above)
- C. School Culture: (links to education, stigma, resilience above)
  - LISTEN to teens! Some want: peer to peer support; nonjudgmental adult support; mental health awareness. Hear from other teens!
  - How do these factors impact students: Homework, AP & college pressures, other pressures? How does the community reduce pressure?
  - How are teens & adults feeling in general? After recent suicides? Learn from Alum art & stories project; Teacher liaisons w/ COS will improve relationships, understanding of issues and support teachers who are impacted by events as well.

COS 4/10/2014

Carol Davis InspiringMore@yahoo.com





## Fairfax County Spends Little on Its Libraries Compared with Other Area Jurisdictions

Terry Maynard  
 Reston Citizens Association Board of Directors  
 Co-Chairman, RCA Reston 2020 Committee  
 April 1, 2014

*Fairfax County spends less money per capita, a smaller share of median household income, less per household, and a smaller share of the County’s total household income on its library system than any other jurisdiction in the area as well as a small, rural Maryland county. The rankings reflect the low priority Fairfax County has given its library system over the last decade. It must reverse course by not cutting the FY2014 library budget and increasing the FY2015 advertised budget by \$2 million.*

Fairfax County, one of the top household income earning counties in the United States, is among the worst in funding the operation of its public libraries, especially in comparison with other area library systems. In fact, data indicate that Fairfax County spends less on its library system per capita than any area library system by a substantial amount.<sup>1</sup> At \$24.10 per person, Fairfax spends less than three-quarters of its nearest “competitor,” Prince Georges County (\$32.49) does on a per capita basis and less than 40% of what Washington, DC, does, the top library spending jurisdiction in our area. Reaching outside the local area to “mountain Maryland” Garrett County—the westernmost county in the state and location of Deep Creek Lake, a regional four-season resort area with a population of less than 30,000 people—we find that that county spends nearly twice as much per capita on its library as does Fairfax County.

### Library Expenditures per Capita, 2012

Jurisdiction	Public Library Expenditures (2012) <sup>a</sup>	Population (2012) <sup>b</sup>	2012 Public Library Per Capita Expenditure (PCE)	PCE Rank
District of Columbia	\$39,214,762	633,427	\$61.91	1
Arlington County	\$12,433,253	221,275	\$56.19	2
City of Alexandria	\$7,422,000	145,011	\$51.18	3
Garrett County, MD	\$1,313,913	29,850	\$44.02	4
Loudoun County	\$12,916,399	337,248	\$38.30	5
Prince William County	\$14,417,964	430,100	\$33.52	6
Montgomery County	\$32,777,717	1,004,476	\$32.63	7
Prince George's County	\$28,640,670	881,419	\$32.49	8
<b>Fairfax County</b>	<b>\$26,955,558</b>	<b>1,118,683</b>	<b>\$24.10</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Sources:</b>				
a. 2013 Statistical Report Public Library Data Service (PLDS)				
b. US Census QuickFacts				

The low regard with which Fairfax County treats its library system is further highlighted when we look at library expenditures as a percent of the jurisdiction’s median household income (MHHI)—a measure of county residents’ wealth. Fairfax County again ranks dead last, this time spending by about two-thirds the expenditures per median household income as the next lowest spender (Loudoun County—the wealthiest county in the country!). And the lowest income county in the list, Garrett County, spends more than four times as much. Garrett County and Washington, DC, (#2 in this list) have the lowest median household income in this comparison, the fact that they are willing to contribute so much to their public library system points directly to how important they view libraries in their jurisdictions. Obviously, Fairfax County does not believe its library system is important.

**Library Expenditures as a Share of Median Household Income, 2012**

Jurisdiction	Public Library Expenditures (2012) <sup>a</sup>	Median HH Income (MHHI) (2012) <sup>b</sup>	Library Expenditures Share of MHHI (100 HHS)	Rank
Garrett County. MD	\$1,313,913	\$45,354	9.7%	1
District of Columbia	\$39,214,762	\$64,267	9.6%	2
City of Alexandria	\$7,422,000	\$83,996	6.1%	3
Arlington County	\$12,433,253	\$102,459	5.5%	4
Prince George's County	\$28,640,670	\$73,568	4.4%	5
Prince William County	\$14,417,964	\$96,160	3.5%	6
Montgomery County	\$32,777,717	\$96,985	3.4%	7
Loudoun County	\$12,916,399	\$122,068	3.1%	8
<b>Fairfax County</b>	<b>\$26,955,558</b>	<b>\$109,383</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>9</b>
<u>Sources:</u>				
a. 2013 Statistical Report Public Library Data Service (PLDS)				
b. US Census QuickFacts				

Still, given the dominance of residential real estate property taxes as a source of revenue for local governments, a better measure of the importance a jurisdiction attributes to its public libraries is its library spending per household. Fairfax County again ranks a distant last in this comparison. Its expenditures are less than half of the top spending jurisdiction— Washington, DC (46%)—and about three-quarters (76%) of the next lowest ranked jurisdiction. Garrett County, with by far the fewest households in this comparison, nonetheless manages to split the difference between the highest spending jurisdiction and Fairfax County at the bottom end of this ranking.

### Library Expenditures per Household, 2012

Jurisdiction	Public Library Expenditures (2012) <sup>a</sup>	Households (2012) <sup>b</sup>	Expenditures per Household	Rank
District of Columbia	\$39,214,762	261,192	\$150.14	1
Arlington County	\$12,433,253	92,992	\$133.70	2
Loudoun County	\$12,916,399	104,195	\$123.96	3
City of Alexandria	\$7,422,000	64,729	\$114.66	4
Prince William County	\$14,417,964	129,643	\$111.21	5
Garrett County, MD	\$1,313,913	12,354	\$106.36	6
Prince George's County	\$28,640,670	302,683	\$94.62	7
Montgomery County	\$32,777,717	357,579	\$91.67	8
<b>Fairfax County</b>	<b>\$26,955,558</b>	<b>388,452</b>	<b>\$69.39</b>	<b>9</b>

Sources:

a. 2013 Statistical Report Public Library Data Service (PLDS)

b. US Census QuickFacts

In the end, the most critical question any county governing body must answer is: How much of the county's wealth are we willing to spend on public libraries? The answer to that question shows that Fairfax County, by far the wealthiest county in this comparison, is willing to spend by far the least. Certainly the most amazing comparison is between Fairfax and Garrett counties: Garrett County spent nearly four times as large a share of its residents' income as Fairfax County, which has a county income *eighty (80) times as large*.<sup>ii</sup> That is simply shameful. In fact, Fairfax County's expenditures as a share of County household income are one-third less than the next lowest county.

### Library Expenditures as a Share of County Household Income, 2012

Jurisdiction	Public Library Expenditures (2012) <sup>a</sup>	Households (2012) <sup>b</sup>	Median Household Income (MHHI) (2012) <sup>b</sup>	County Household Income*	Expenditures as a Share of County HH Income*	Rank
Garrett County, MD	\$1,313,913	12,354	\$45,354	\$ 560,303,316	0.23%	1
District of Columbia	\$39,214,762	261,192	\$64,267	\$ 16,786,026,264	0.23%	2
City of Alexandria	\$7,422,000	64,729	\$83,996	\$ 5,436,977,084	0.14%	3
Arlington County	\$12,433,253	92,992	\$102,459	\$ 9,527,867,328	0.13%	4
Prince George's County	\$28,640,670	302,683	\$73,568	\$ 22,267,782,944	0.13%	5
Prince William County	\$14,417,964	129,643	\$96,160	\$ 12,466,470,880	0.12%	6
Loudoun County	\$12,916,399	104,195	\$122,068	\$ 12,718,875,260	0.10%	7
Montgomery County	\$32,777,717	357,579	\$96,985	\$ 34,679,799,315	0.09%	8
<b>Fairfax County</b>	<b>\$26,955,558</b>	<b>388,452</b>	<b>\$109,383</b>	<b>\$ 42,490,045,116</b>	<b>0.06%</b>	<b>9</b>

Sources:

a. 2013 Statistical Report Public Library Data Service (PLDS)

b. US Census QuickFacts

\* Using MHHI to calculate County Income significantly understates the value of County household income because incomes are open-ended at the top. Wealthier counties, such as Loudoun, Fairfax, Arlington, Montgomery, and Prince William counties, have a disproportionately higher county income. As a result, the public library expenditure shares shown here are overstated (i.e.--Fairfax spent an even smaller share than reported here), but not significantly affecting the jurisdiction rankings.

No doubt those opposed to increasing Fairfax County's library budget—and maybe even wanting to cut it further in the revised FY2014 budget— will say that these cross-jurisdictional comparisons are not truly comparable. Here is quick look at some of their likely criticisms:

- Economies of scale. Economies of scale exist, but are not nearly substantial enough to account for the major shortfalls in Fairfax County library spending. Montgomery County is most comparable in population and income and it spends about one-third to one-half more than Fairfax County on all of the metrics provided above.
- Higher personnel costs elsewhere. Although Maryland and Washington have higher labor compensation standards than “right to work” Virginia, there is absolutely no reason to believe that Fairfax County’s personnel costs are significantly different (higher or lower) than other area Virginia counties. In the comparisons above, Virginia’s other counties generally rank in the upper half of each comparison. Even Loudoun County, which ranks just two notches above Fairfax in the comparison of expenditures to total county household income above, spends two-thirds more than Fairfax County.
- Higher tax rates elsewhere. For example, the Loudoun County property tax rate is \$1.205 per \$100 valuation according to its official website. Prince William is \$1.181 per \$100 valuation. Maryland generally has higher property tax rates, but it significantly undervalues properties (and does so every three years in advance on a statewide basis). As in Maryland, the question that is unanswered in Virginia is the valuation of the property that is taxed. We suspect that Fairfax County—the economic engine of Northern Virginia and total county household income more than three times that of its nearest Virginia competitor, Loudoun County—has a substantially higher county-wide taxable property valuation that enables it to keep its tax rates significantly lower than other jurisdictions while providing needed county services. Failing to account for property values in this argument is misleading.
- No doubt there are other criticisms, but the above make the point.

***The critical issue is Fairfax County’s budget priorities***, not valuations, tax rates, costs, population density, etc. Every other jurisdiction discussed in this paper—large or small, wealthy or poor, more or less expensive—has made *at least* a one-third greater investment in its library systems’ operation than has Fairfax County. And on expenditures per capita and expenditures as a share of County income, Fairfax County spends less than one-quarter of the leading jurisdictions.

The bottom line is that Fairfax County has demonstrated a tremendous disregard for the nurturing of its public library system since at least the middle of the last decade. Its spending on public libraries is disgraceful in any reasonable comparison with area jurisdictions and especially so when compared to a strawman jurisdiction, Garrett County, MD, with a tremendously smaller population and income. If Fairfax County’s public library spending is not reversed now, the library system will become an empty shell. The fact of the matter is Fairfax County is in an excellent financial position to reverse course. It has just chosen not to so far.

It is time to change direction and meet the needs of County residents by investing in re-creating a first-rate County public library system with more books, librarians, programs (especially for youth), and community involvement. There must be no new cuts in the FCPL budget in FY2014 and its leadership must be directed to actually hire people in a timely manner for the more than 40 vacant positions that have been available since last fiscal year. Moreover, as the County moves forward with the FY2015

budget, we believe the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (FCFCA) recommendation to add \$2 million to the advertised FY2015 budget represents a minimum first step in beginning to correct the library budget mistakes of the last decade.

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<sup>i</sup> This accounting of library expenditures includes the City of Fairfax, which is served by Fairfax County Public Library. None of the other columns in the tables used in this report include the City of Fairfax and, therefore, they slightly overstate the “per” or “share” values for Fairfax County. These differences are minimal and do not affect the rankings or judgments in this analysis.

<sup>ii</sup> In addition to the adjustments in County household income noted in the table below, County gross product is also substantially affected by corporate incomes. Total County gross income is not available. Published estimates of gross County product we’ve seen range between \$95 billion and \$190 billion for Fairfax County in recent years.

April 7, 2014

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
c/o Catherine A. Chianese, Clerk to Board of Supervisors  
Fairfax County Government Center  
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 530  
Fairfax, VA 22035-0079

Re: FY 2015 Budget – Funding for the Fairfax County Consumers Affairs Branch

Dear Chairman Bulova and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

The officers of the Washington Metropolitan Chapter of Community Associations Institute (“WMCCAI”) were surprised and concerned to learn that funding for the Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch is in question for FY 2015. We urge you to maintain the funding for this vital and important office.

WMCCAI is one the largest chapters of Community Association Institute, which is an international organization that provides information, education and resources to all community association stakeholders, including community managers and homeowner leaders. CAI’s mission is to inspire professionalism, effective leadership and responsible citizenship—ideals reflected in communities that are preferred places to call home.

In our experience, the Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch provides a vital and irreplaceable service to Fairfax County residents. In Fairfax County, there are about 1,500 planned common interest community associations, which include property owners’ association, condominium associations and cooperatives. These community associations provide many of the services that state and local governments have provided in the past (e.g. trash collection, road maintenance, snow removal and storm water management, etc.), which has enabled local jurisdictions such as Fairfax County to allow for the development of needed housing without having to pay directly for it through property taxes.

Community associations are governed by elected volunteer boards of directors who quietly and effectively lead their respective communities. While recent surveys indicate that that most residents speak positively about their community associations, these organizations are not perfect and disagreements arise from time to time. Board members and residents alike need an unbiased resource to provide and guidance as well as address the problems and issues that may arise. The Consumer Affairs Branch fills this important and helpful role.

Consumer Affairs Branch assists consumers by providing advice and guidance on consumer issues, mediating complaints, offering arbitration, developing and distributing educational publications and resources, and providing educational training and outreach. For years, when a member of a community association in Fairfax County has a question or concern, one of their first resources has been the office of the Consumer Affairs Branch.

7600 Leesburg Pike  
Suite 100 West  
Falls Church, VA 22043

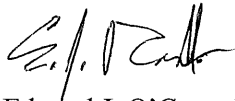
703.750.3644 PHONE  
703.941.1740 FAX  
[www.caidc.org](http://www.caidc.org)

In FY 2013 alone, the Consumer Affairs Branch handled 7,314 case inquiries which included complaints, advice, and walk-ins which recovered \$556,162 for consumers. In addition, the Consumer Affairs Branch produces valuable educational publications and programs on a wide variety of important topics.


The outreach and support that the Consumer Affairs Branch conducts directly benefits residents who reside in the 1500 community associations in Fairfax County. For these reasons, and many more not mentioned here, the Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Branch needs to remain fully staffed and funded to ensure that the volunteer leaders and residents of these common-interest communities are well-educated and informed and have a means to address concerns and issues.

Thank you for allowing us an opportunity to share our comments and concerns with you. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Respectfully,



Edward J. O'Connell, Esq.  
President



Matt Rankin  
Executive Director

Cc: Fairfax County Department of Management and Budget