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Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Budget Public Hearing, Wednesday, April 15, 2026

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[00:00:02] Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to get started and be respectful of everyone's time. This afternoon, we do have a lot of speakers who have signed up to speak, over 80.

[00:00:18] So we will try to get through them as quickly as possible. I'd ask everyone to be respectful of your time so that we can hear from all 80-plus folks who want to testify. As you know, this is a public hearing on the FY 2027 advertised budget plan.

[00:00:34] the Advertised Capital Improvement Program, CIP, for fiscal years 2027 to 2031, and the FY26 third quarter review. During this public hearing, we'll also accept testimony on the FY2027 effective tax rate.

[00:00:51] As I mentioned, we do have a lengthy speakers list today, so I will note up front, just so folks who are here are aware, that anyone who is not already registered to speak has the opportunity to walk in or call in. However, those speakers will be heard on Thursday following all speakers who are on the formal speakers list.

[00:01:10] So if you are here today and are not on the speakers list, we will be hearing from those speakers at the end of the day on Thursday following all other speakers that are on the list. And let me also

mention that if I call your name, I'm going to call the speakers in the order in which they're listed with one exception.

[00:01:30] when I call your name if I'm calling your name please come down close there's a lot of seats up here in the front of the auditorium come down close and be ready to testify we waste a lot of people's time in this auditorium watching them walk all the way down the stairs and hoping that they don't trip and fall don't be one of those people so when I call your name please come down close there's rows down here in the front where you can wait and with that I am going to make one change to the speaker's list. I'm going to take speaker number six and move that speaker to speaker number one. It is the only change to the speaker's order that will happen today. So if

[00:02:09] you're tracking along to try to see where you are, we will be following them exactly as they're listed on this speaker's list. And speaker number six, who is now speaker number one, will be Sheriff Stacy Kincaid, followed by John Boylan, Shannon Steen, and Andrew Locker.

[00:02:26] In that order, and we're pleased to start off our afternoon welcoming Sheriff Kincaid. Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the board. On behalf of the men and women of the Sheriff's Office, I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the FY2027 advertised budget.

[00:02:47] Over the last several years, we've seen a steady decline in our workforce. From 2021 to 2025, our vacancy rate increased 19% in the adult detention center. As our staffing levels continue to decrease, the use of mandatory overtime was implemented to fill in the gaps.

[00:03:06] Overtime has more than doubled, climbing from 34,000 hours in 2021 to over 79,000 hours in 2025. Since the onset of the staffing crisis, the Sheriff's Office has taken extensive internal measures to address staffing challenges.

[00:03:23] We have revised staffing formulas, implemented significant operational adjustments by eliminating work release, our community labor force, and sentencing options for judges just so we can perform our core and mandated functions.

[00:03:39] Our agency has a fundamental and critical role within the criminal justice system of Fairfax County. Without us, the courts cannot operate, the jail shuts down, and those who are incarcerated would not receive the next level of rehabilitative services that my staff provide, including addressing and treating mental illness and addiction.

[00:04:01] This would significantly impact the health and human services we provide to a population that is already high risk. As I have stated in the past, the impact and data provided to the board, the biggest obstacle in reducing the vacancies rate is compensation.

[00:04:18] While our compensation has been left unaddressed, our vacancies and overtime costs have continued to rise. The fact is, our deputies are leaving for other departments and agencies because of compensation. As shown in our November presentation at the Public Safety Committee, our biggest competitor remains the Fairfax County Police Department.

[00:04:39] And not just for hiring, but more importantly, for retention. Historically, our deputies have left at a rate of 37% for the Fairfax County Police Department, and over the last five years, that number has

risen to 47%. The starting salary for the police department is 12.78% higher than the starting salary for my deputies.

[00:05:01] The pay gap widens even further at the supervisory level. A frontline supervisor with the police department earns over 24% more than a frontline supervisor with the sheriff's office. While the 12.78% disparity exists across the entire pay scale, this gap is most significant at the frontline leadership ranks, making it increasingly difficult to develop and retain the next generation of supervisors.

[00:05:28] Our staff can leave for another agency, start at the bottom, and still earn considerably more. Since the presentation, another four deputy sheriffs have left for the Fairfax County Police Department. We are doing more with less and paying more to staff fewer deputies.

[00:05:44] The trajectory is unsustainable and places increasing strain on our personnel, our budget, and our operational readiness. It is estimated we will spend \$17 million on overtime during this fiscal year than the \$16 million we spent last year.

[00:06:02] More important than the dollar amount is the number of additional hours worked per deputy. These additional hours lead to fatigue, lower morale, less time spent with family, and have a tremendous impact on their well-being. On average, my staff has lost 30% of their days off, working sometimes three extra shifts per pay period just to provide coverage.

[00:06:26] It is clear that our staffing crisis is a direct result of compensation, and we need a solution to fix this disparity. I understand and appreciate that third-quarter funding has been obtained to perform a pay comparison study for my agency. Such a study, as we know, is only as good as the metrics and comparators used.

[00:06:46] We hope that this pay study accurately reflects and aligns us with agencies who provide the highest level of service and excellence to the communities that they serve. We are your sheriff's office and the best sheriff's office in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Thank you.

[00:07:02] Thank you very much, Sheriff Kincaid. Thank you for your service and your testimony, and thank you also to all of your deputies who are here. We appreciate you. Thank you for coming out. Speaker number two is John Boylan, to be followed by Shannon Steen and Andrew Locker.

[00:07:19] Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the board. I'm John Boylan. I reside in Centerville, Virginia, and I'm here to represent the Affordable Housing Advisory Council, AHAC. Harden not your hearts. I know you hear that several times today, but I know your hearts are not hardened. I've recently spent time at a shelter with some of the members.

[00:07:37] I serve on boards, and I've met one-on-one. Your hearts and minds are aligned for the greatest good of the county. I would like you to consider yourself today, though, as investors, as job creators. When you direct funds to housing, you create white-collar jobs for architects, attorneys, and bankers.

[00:07:53] You create hundreds and hundreds of blue-collar jobs when they buy tools and trucks and food and coffee, creating an ecosystem of opportunity. By investing in housing, you solve problems with transportation, workforce development, and economic development. While helping the economy, you also address social needs.

[00:08:11] AHAC is deeply appreciative of your leadership and your sustained commitment to affordable housing. You've set a bold goal, 10,000 new affordable homes by 2034, and you've backed that goal with real

investment. From FY22 through FY25, the county committed nearly \$200 million to affordable housing.

[00:08:29] That level of investment has positioned Fairfax County as a regional leader, and your progress towards a recurring baseline, now approximately \$42 million annually, is significant. It reflects a shift from one-time investments to a more sustainable funding approach.

[00:08:46] But the reality before us is this. The scale of the need still exceeds the scale of the current investment. When housing needs assessment makes that clear, among renters earning less than \$75,000 a year, 87% are cost burdened, and more than half of them are severely cost burdened.

[00:09:03] And the most significant shortage remains in the households at 60% AMI and below. This is not a marginal gap. This is a structural gap, and closing it requires a structural response. The board has already identified that response, a commitment to two pennies on the real estate tax rate, approximately \$70 million.

[00:09:22] That is the level of sustained local investment required to meet the 10,000 unit goal and a fully leveraged development opportunities in front of us, and timing matters. We are nearing the midpoint to 2034 with only 30% of the needed units delivered or under construction.

[00:09:39] The pace must accelerate, and the conditions to do so are in place. We have the pipeline, we have the partners, we have the projects. What determines whether those projects move forward and at what pace is the availability of local funding. Because in today's environment, local dollars and the critical piece that allows deals to close, they leverage tax credits, they attract private capital, and they determine whether a project is feasible or not.

[00:10:06] This is where the county's resource allocation decisions are decisive. As you consider the FY27 budget and upcoming carryover, AHAC urges you to act with that sense of urgency. First, increase the baseline this year, not incrementally, but meaningfully, toward the two-penny target.

[00:10:24] Second, use carryover and one-time funds strategically to accelerate projects already in the pipeline. There are near-term opportunities where additional county investments can immediately translate into units delivered. Third, provide clear FY28 budget guidance that commits to achieving the full two pennies as part of the baseline.

[00:10:43] That signal matters, not just internally, but to development partners, lenders, and investors who are making long-term decisions. And to continue to align these investments with your broader policy tools. At the state level, new authorities are giving localities more flexibility in zoning and land use.

[00:11:00] And Fairfax County is actively advancing recommendations to use those tools. Whether through increased density or appropriate areas, more efficient entitlement processes, or better use of public lands. While these tools increase efficiency, they do not replace the need for local funding.

[00:11:16] They make our dollars go further. And that is why resource allocation remains the central decision before you. Finally, we would also underscore that housing stability requires more than production alone. As you invest in housing, continued investment in wraparound services, including child care, case management, and eviction prevention, is essential.

[00:11:37] We appreciate the additional baseline funding for emergency rental and food assistance included in the advertised budget, and we strongly support continued investment through the

consolidated community funding pool. Without those resources, housing stability is harder to achieve and harder to sustain.

[00:11:54] The next step is to ensure that our funding framework matches the scale of the need and the urgency of the moment. Fairfax County has the vision, the strategy, the partners. Now is the moment to align resources to that vision. Thank you for your leadership and thank you for your partnership.

[00:12:10] Thank you very much, John. We're now on speaker number two, Shannon Steen, to be followed by Andrew Locker and Ashwak Nur. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Shannon Steen. I am honored to serve as the new CEO of Cornerstones.

[00:12:27] Thank you for the opportunity to address you. on behalf of the people we serve and the community we all share. Cornerstones was founded by Faith Communities in 1970 with a simple, powerful conviction that every person in this community deserves to be seen and heard, valued and supported.

[00:12:45] We do this in close partnership with the county, other non-profits, corporations, neighborhood groups and volunteers. It is truly a community effort. Over more than five decades, we have walked alongside tens of thousands of our neighbors and today we touch approximately 26,000 people each year across our service area.

[00:13:05] Families working multiple jobs who cannot make rent, seniors trying to age safely in their homes they love, children whose first experience of stability comes through our child care and shelter programs, and new neighbors navigating complex systems with dignity and resilience.

[00:13:22] We operate emergency shelters, a child care center, food and financial assistance programs, and permanent affordable housing. In short, we provide wraparound services that keep people housed, fed, employed, and thriving, and that helps them get back on their feet when life knocks them down.

[00:13:42] As the new CEO, I come to this work with deep respect for what this organization has built, our partnership with you, and with urgency about what our community still needs. I am proud to stand before you this afternoon to speak to both. Cornerstones is grateful for several important investments reflected in the county executive's draft budget.

[00:14:02] and we urge this board to adopt and build upon them. First, we're pleased to see \$5.5 million in additional funding for emergency housing and food assistance. This investment is not abstract. It translates directly into the stabilizing bridge that prevents a crisis from becoming a catastrophe for families in our community.

[00:14:23] Second, we want to express our strong appreciation for the continued investment in legal supports to prevent eviction. Through our opportunity neighborhoods in Herndon and Reston, as well as our community-connected sites, We hear the realities voiced by those struggling to stay stably housed.

[00:14:40] Legal eviction prevention services are among the highest return investments a county can make, and we applaud this board's recognition of that. Third, we're pleased to see an increase in the consolidated community funding pool. The CCFP is a lifeline for nonprofit partners across Fairfax County, including Cornerstones, who deliver essential human services at the community level.

[00:15:02] We are grateful for this increase, and we encourage the Board to continue growing this investment in future budgets. I want to take a moment to speak to the broader philosophy that drives all of Cornerstone's work, and that I believe should drive public investment as well.

[00:15:20] People do not experience poverty in a single dimension. A family that loses housing rarely faces only a housing problem. They face food insecurity, child care disruption, employment instability, health care gaps, legal issues, and trauma all at once.

[00:15:40] Wraparound services, the intentional weaving together of housing, child care, food, legal, financial, and case management support are not an expensive luxury. They are the most efficient and effective model we have for producing durable stability.

[00:15:56] The budgetary investments this board is considering are most powerful when they are connected to the community's true needs, when a family receiving emergency housing assistance also has access to a case manager, a child care slot, a legal advocate. Cornerstones is designed to be exactly that connective tissue in this community, and we are grateful for the county's partnership in making it possible. Chairman McKay, members of the board, for 56 years Cornerstones has been in the business of seeing and listening to people. Seeing the mother who is one paycheck away from

[00:16:32] losing her apartment, listening to the elderly man who is cold because his furnace is broken and he cannot afford to fix it. Seeing the child who comes to our learning center frightened and leaves with confidence. Listening to our neighbors, all of them, as full human beings, deserving stability, dignity, and hope. The investments in this draft budget reflect the same act of seeing and listening, and we are grateful. We ask that you continue to look and listen and act with the urgency that our neighbors deserve. Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to One Fairfax for everyone. Thank you.

[00:17:12] Thank you very much, Shannon, and congratulations to you on your new position. Thank you. Speaker number three is Andrew Locker, to be followed by Ashwak Nur and Allison Wells. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, members of the Board of Supervisors and county staff.

[00:17:30] My name is Andy Latcher, and I'm a longtime county resident and chair of the Board of Cornerstones, a nonprofit, as you heard, that has served this community for over 55 years. I want to begin by thanking you for your strong commitment to social service programs in the FY27 advertised budget.

[00:17:49] Important investments are being made in the consolidated community funding pool, emergency housing, emergency food assistant, and affordable housing support. Those choices matter. Nonprofits like Cornerstones are not on the sidelines of Fairfax County's human services system.

[00:18:07] We are part of how the county delivers on its commitments. Through county contracts, nonprofits bring trusted relationships, community knowledge, and the ability to respond quickly when people are in crisis. Continued investment in these partnerships is an investment in the county's capacity.

[00:18:27] While significant increases have been proposed, they are insufficient for nonprofit providers to keep paced with rising costs and increased need. Just like other workers in our region, nonprofit employees need and certainly deserve cost of living increases.

[00:18:46] Shifting gears a bit, I'm sure you're getting a lot of advice on how the board might direct the \$23.3 million discretionary item in the budget. Perhaps I could offer a suggestion. Cornerstone fully supports the board's goal of 10,000 new affordable housing units by 2034 and ensuring that two pennies of the real estate assessment is devoted to affordable housing investment.

[00:19:14] While the investment goal was acknowledged and affirmed in the advertised budget, we again fall short, holding constant with only 1.25 pennies proposed in FY27. According to the county's housing

needs assessment, the rental housing market has a shortage of 13,800 homes affordable to households at 60% AMI and below.

[00:19:38] The market is not delivering homes to address this gap, and Fairfax County's Redevelopment and Housing Authority is the main driver of new affordable dwelling units. The county's analysis also shows that from 2013 to 2023, the growth in rental housing supply in Fairfax County was only 5%.

[00:19:58] This is half of the D.C. area average. Given the importance of the 10,000-unit construction goal, the fact that we are less than halfway there, and the recognition that the county investment has proven absolutely critical towards achieving it, Rather than making no progress toward the two-penny goal in FY27, Cornerstones encourages the board to consider taking part of the \$23 million discretionary item and making progress toward the two-penny goal.

[00:20:27] Thank you for your leadership, your partnership, your commitment, and your service to our community. Thank you, Andrew. Speaker number four is Ashwak Nurt, to be followed by Allison Wells and David Simon. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors.

[00:20:47] My name is Ashwak Nurt. I'm a senior at Southlakes High School and a resident advocate with community-connected sites. I hope to attend college as a first-generation student this fall. While I'm excited about this opportunity, I'm also worried about the rising cost of living in Fairfax County and what it will mean for my family if I leave for college.

[00:21:06] I live with my parents and my younger brother, and I play an important role in helping my family every day. I support my parents in navigating language barriers, help manage our budget as rising grocery prices, and other essential costs continue to strain our family finances. Balancing these responsibilities while trying to prepare for my future can feel very overwhelming.

[00:21:26] I'm speaking today because the rising cost of living in Fairfax County feels overwhelming for families and young people like me. I've watched my family and neighbors work hard and still struggle to keep up with housing, groceries, transportation, and utilities. Since my father lost his job that he's held for 24 years, I've been working two jobs, attending school full-time, applying to college, and considering a third job to help support my family.

[00:21:50] It has been incredibly stressful to carry all of this at once. As I reflected on my story, I realized that watching my family and neighbors struggle has become so normal that it barely stands out anymore. Recently, one of my neighbors was temporarily out of work, and because they were living paycheck to paycheck with no savings, they lost access to water, heat, and Wi-Fi.

[00:22:11] Affordable housing is not just about cost. It's also about quality, safety, and dignity. My family lives in Stonegate Apartments in Reston. My parents came here from a war-torn country, hoping to raise their children in a safe community, but instead, we've often lived in an environment where gang activity and drug dealing made us feel unsafe.

[00:22:30] These conditions affected me so deeply that when I was nine years old, a friend and I collected signatures and wrote to Fairfax County officials asking for safe housing and for concerns to be heard. I want to thank the Board of Supervisors for the \$8.5 million in this budget dedicated to housing and human services.

[00:22:48] That investment matters because as costs rise, more families need help not only recovering from hardship, but also preventing crisis. When my father lost his job, the impact reached far beyond employment alone, adding hardship to every aspect of our lives. In moments like that, families need more than hope. They need real support.

[00:23:08] Nonprofit organizations like Cornerstones help families access food, housing, and essential services that help them remain stable. As you consider to use the remaining \$23 million, I urge you to invest in human services and community-based support that helps families like mine remain healthy, stable, and hopeful about the future.

[00:23:30] Fairfax County should be a place where young people can imagine a future, not feel priced out before it even begins. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you very much. Good job. Our next speaker is Allison Wells, to be followed by David Simon and Lucy Biednow. Welcome. Hello, my name is Allison Wells. I moved to Fairfax County in 2010 after finishing my undergraduate degree in order to pursue job opportunities. Initially, my now husband and I didn't plan on staying here for more than two years. It's now been over 16 years.

[00:24:08] One of the biggest things keeping us here are the parks and access to natural surface trails. We are both avid mountain bikers, members of MORE, the Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiast nonprofit, and volunteer hundreds of hours annually to the local mountain bike trail systems. Mountain biking has improved our physical fitness, mental health, and provided us with a community of friends.

[00:24:30] These may seem like simple things, but have greatly impacted our lives for the better. Additionally, as housing prices continue to increase, the ability to afford a yard has diminished. We find ourselves using the parks to fill that gap. I respectfully urge the board to fully fund the parks authority and prevent budget cuts that would severely undermine the agency's ability to serve the community.

[00:24:53] Increased funding is critical to address deferred maintenance, such as repairing bridges and erosion issues, clearing down trees and over-grant trail systems, and ensuring continued safety and usability of a heavily used and whale-loved trail system. Additionally, a permanent trail crew would reduce long-term costs compared to hiring outside contractors and would ensure more consistent upkeep of county trails.

[00:25:17] Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you very much. Appreciate your testimony. We're now on speaker number seven, David Simon, to be followed by Lucy Biednell and Marlene Blum.

[00:25:42] Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to be heard regarding the proposed budget for fiscal year 2027.

[00:26:00] My name is David Simon, and I'm here on behalf of the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board. The DSB has reviewed and discussed relevant portions of next year's proposed budget and feel it's imperative that we advocate on behalf of three specific items. The transfer of transition services to FCPS, a \$400,000 transfer.

[00:26:21] The reduction in home-delivered meals, a \$392,000 item. And the reduced mailroom contract to better align with needs, a \$23,000 item. Regarding the transfer of transition services from the CSB to FCPS, we urge the Board of Supervisors to perform additional diligence prior to execution.

[00:26:43] Transition services currently offered through the CSB support students with developmental disabilities who are matriculating out of FCPS and help them achieve independence, integrate into the community, and to pursue employment and other activities. FCPS does not traditionally connect high school seniors with IEPs to employment and day services, and we question whether FCPS will be able to add the required additional staff in time to support this need.

[00:27:11] Continuing to keep these services within the CSB is the lower risk path to ensure that these vulnerable students do not fall through the cracks in this critical and tumultuous transition period. Secondly, in regard to the planned reduction in the home-delivered meals program from 11 to the federally mandated minimum of five meals per week, we urged the board to consider other middle ground options, even though they would lessen the expected reduction in program costs as compared to the planned more than 50% reduction in delivered meals.

[00:27:43] Food insecurity is a real issue, and the proposed cuts are severe. And while we recognize that an intermediate reduction in the number of meals provided per week will be less of a reduction in program costs, we believe it to be a viable middle ground. As an example, going from 11 to 8 meals per week is only half of the proposed reduction.

[00:28:08] And even if the resulting savings are less than half of what would be saved by going to 5 meals, we believe that the county needs to err on the side of a gentler program change for this vulnerable population. There can still be some reduction in program cost, but the proposed change is simply too drastic.

[00:28:26] Lastly, I'd like to voice our opposition to the planned elimination of a part-time mailroom position currently held by an individual with a disability. This elimination saves less than \$23,000, and by all accounts, the individual in this position has performed their job well. And we believe that it sends the wrong message to somebody who's doing all the right things.

[00:28:46] Retraining or repurposing should be the way forward here, rather than firing. And with that, I thank the board for your time and attention, and I look forward to seeing your decisions. Thank you, David. Thank you very much. Speaker number eight is Lucy Biednell to be followed by Marlene Blum and Eric Riegling.

[00:29:06] Good afternoon. I'm Lucy Biednell with the Arc of Northern Virginia. David and I didn't coordinate this, but we're going to dovetail really nicely. We're proud to have been in Fairfax since 1962, promoting and protecting rights and services for people with disabilities and their families.

[00:29:24] And we are thrilled that Fairfax is a community and especially every single face on this board has been a partner in making the county more inclusive over the years. It matters tremendously. I have endless empathy for the decisions you all have to make in an incredibly challenging budget time, and I won't be changing jobs with you.

[00:29:42] I would like to ask first that you continue to do what you have been doing and support our graduates with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We know this year funding them is offset by the funding that the ARC and partners brought into the state through Medicaid waiver dollars, so we're exchanging local dollars for waiver dollars.

[00:30:00] New waivers aren't coming next year, and we want to make sure that that stays safe. Likewise, many of those students in the past, instead of accessing the full amount of local funding, used 20% less by

opting for self-directed services that maximized choice and reduced spending, and that program has been gutted last year in this.

[00:30:23] It has been the only way that many students, especially from low-income families with disabilities, ever had a chance at college and other opportunities, and we would like to see that come back. As David mentioned, we know that there's a planned transition for transition staff to help students leave high school and go to the adult world, moving from the CSB to the schools. I would be the first to say, if you ask me where the smartest place to spend your dollars are for long-term disability savings, it's inclusive schools. So if we can make school staff smart and well geared up and invest in them and make transition a reality, that's great. But

[00:30:58] there's very, very little room for error there in people experiencing some incredibly tumultuous times that are usually described to us as like falling off a cliff. And lastly, we wanted to urge support for some of the things you heard from David about our partners in the aging community.

[00:31:13] We are concerned about the elimination of Rebuilding Together that offers some very limited funds for people with disabilities and seniors to stay in their homes, which we hear about is a huge challenge and moving and relocating someone who can't afford to stay in their own home to affordable housing is not a cost saver it's a poor choice we are similarly concerned about the meals on wheels reductions from 11 meals a week to less than half of that at five and i can't think of a more basic need than food thank you so much for what you are doing we know the county is struggling and we want to continue to be your partner let's make fairfax more inclusive thank

[00:31:53] Thank you very much, Lucy. Speaker number nine is Marlene Blum, to be followed by Eric Riegelung and Nancy Verona. Welcome, Marlene. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, members of the board. I'm Marlene Blum, chairman of the Healthcare Advising Board, otherwise known as the HCAB.

[00:32:11] Our complete statement with additional details has been sent to you and is also attached to this testimony. I'm here this afternoon to highlight several issues in the fiscal year 2027 budget. I'll focus on the health department first. The HCAB recognizes that the health care labor market continues to be tight.

[00:32:30] We therefore support the proposed increases in employee compensation that should help the county recruit, retain, and fairly compensate staff. Understanding that the county's nonprofit partners play a significant and crucial role in delivering needed programs and services and knowing that these agencies are also facing the impacts of inflation and the difficult labor market, the HCAB strongly supports the proposed increased funding for contract rate adjustments.

[00:32:58] The HCAB is especially pleased that \$35 million has been included in the 2026 Health and Human Services Bond Referendum to support the design and construction associated with the renovation and expansion of the Joanne Jorgensen Public Health Laboratory.

[00:33:17] We thank the Planning Commission, the county executive, and the board for making this much-needed project a priority. The HCAB wants to alert the board to the need for additional epidemiologist positions in the health department. The resurgence of measles in the United States and also right here in Fairfax County has focused attention on a broader challenge, limited epidemiological capacity to manage both everyday communicable disease work and the additional demands that arise when disease activity increases.

[00:33:51] Measles is highly contagious, and the contact investigation associated with even a single case is labor-intensive. The work that has recently been done and that will need to continue to prevent outbreaks is critical to protecting the health and safety of our community, and there's a strong possibility that measles will not be the only disease that is a threat.

[00:34:15] Meanwhile, the health department conducts routine year-round surveillance and investigations for communicable diseases and other conditions. But the declining vaccination rates and reduced community immunity will continue to increase the likelihood of cases that will require a surge response to prevent an outbreak.

[00:34:34] When that happens, staff must be pulled from essential ongoing work, thus endangering the community's health. The HCAB therefore urges the board to add two epidemiologists' positions to the health department to strengthen the department's monitoring and evaluation capacity that supports essential population health activities and to provide the flexibility to scale up quickly to prevent outbreaks and to deal with actual outbreaks or other public health emergencies.

[00:35:02] This investment would ensure that the county is better prepared to protect the community from everyday risks and future public health threats. the HCAB also calls the board's attention to the Child Seat Safety Inspection and Installation Program. The funding for this police department program was eliminated in the fiscal year 26 budget, but the board's budget guidance directed the police department to review other options to provide this valuable service to the community, which could include training volunteers in the CERT or auxiliary police to fulfill this role. Not knowing whether or not the board has

[00:35:37] been kept informed the HCAB is reporting that the police department program no longer exists. While the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office does continue to offer inspection, the service is offered only monthly and usually only at the county courthouse complex. We wanted to be sure that the board is aware that the anticipated increase in community capacity to replace the loss of this county-funded service has not materialized and that current service levels are not able to meet countywide needs. The HCAB therefore urges the board to restore the modest funding that was cut in the fiscal year 26 budget and to bring back this valuable police

[00:36:15] department program. It would be a sensible county investment in the prevention of children's traffic deaths and injuries. Last but not least, the HCAB is concerned that the fiscal year 2027 budget mentioned specifically that some of the much needed additional funding for homeless services contracts will be used for hypothermia prevention but omits any mention of the danger of extreme heat to our homeless neighbors. It's a good day to remind the board and the staff that extreme heat is the number one weather-related cause of death in the United States and to urge that it receive

[00:36:52] equal emphasis in planning services and allocating the funding. Thank you. Thank you, Marlene. Speaker number 10 is Eric Riegeling, to be followed by Nancy Verona and David Edelman. Welcome.

[00:37:11] Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman and Board. My name is Eric Riegeling. I'm a Fairfax County resident, father of two, an election officer, and an avid cyclist. In 2025, I biked over 2,500 miles, most of them starting right from my home in the Dranesville District.

[00:37:29] I rely upon our trail systems not just for recreation and exercise, but for my daily life. I also volunteer with Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts, working directly on trail building and maintenance. I

know what it takes to keep the trails safe, sustainable, and accessible, and how quickly they can fall behind without proper support.

[00:37:47] According to the Fairfax County Park Authority's Needs Assessment, 84% of residents rate trails as the most important park amenity. That's a strong and clear signal about what our community values. We're fortunate to have an incredible trail network, Lake Fairfax, Wakefield, the Cross County Trail, the Washington Old Dominion Trail, But regular users and volunteers see growing gaps, as Allison Wells spoke of earlier.

[00:38:13] Erosion, damaged bridges, and deferred maintenance that impacts safety and usability. To highlight one specific gap, one that presents a real safety issue, and if Remedied could provide an essential loop route along our beautiful waterways, our ribbons of green.

[00:38:29] Today, the Sugar Land Run Trail ends at Drainsville Road. From there, there's no safe, connected route northward toward the Potomac River and the Potomac Heritage Trail. To continue, cyclists and pedestrians are forced onto several busy roads, including Drainsville, Route 7, Fairfax County Parkway, which turns into Algonquian Parkway, and Seneca Ridge Road, navigating high-speed automotive traffic and dangerous crossings.

[00:38:55] There's a clear opportunity here to extend the trail north from its current terminus at Drainsville, follow the valley, pass safely under Route 7, and connect to the existing trail network in Loudoun, which connects to the Potomac Heritage Trail. This would eliminate hazardous gaps, create a continuous corridor from the Washington Old Dominion, and unlock meaningful regional connections to our local history.

[00:39:17] There are several places in the county which could use several small pieces to link up larger sections of trail. This is the exact kind of project that turns a good trail system into a truly functional one. I urge you to fully fund the park authority, not just maintain what we have, but to increase the funding so we can make critical connections like this.

[00:39:38] I also strongly support investment in a dedicated full-time trail maintenance team to ensure long-term sustainability and cost efficiency. If we listen to residents, an 84% have already told us that trails matter, then we should invest accordingly, both in maintaining and expanding the trail system.

[00:39:56] Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to Fairfax County's parks and their multi-use trails. Thank you. Speaker number 11 is Nancy Verona, to be followed by David Edelman and Patty Klein. Welcome. Thank you. Chairman McKay and members of the board, good afternoon.

[00:40:15] My name is Nancy Verona, and I am a nearly 40-year resident of Mason District, living near Seven Corners and Justice High School. Today, I urge you to reduce the real estate tax rate. The county's high property taxes make it unaffordable for a great many of us, as must be obvious from constituent feedback, out-migration trends, and by considerations of prospective DMV residents when choosing jurisdictions other than our county.

[00:40:48] Especially because the county's budget is large and complex, I believe it's imperative that conversations about the cost of operating the county include functioning more efficiently, effectively, and wisely. Uncomfortable as this is, allow me to cite a few examples.

[00:41:09] The Colmore Library. In 2015, the library, then Woodrow Wilson, reopened after a nearly two-year, six-plus-million-dollar renovation that included installation of a new HVAC system.

[00:41:25] Yet in January 2026, the library was closed for a one-year, \$2 million to \$8 million replacement of that HVAC system. So something is terribly amiss.

[00:41:42] original design, installation, engineering, and taxpayers bear the burden of this replacement. Roundtree Park. In late December 2025, FCPA employed an excavator and trucks laden with boulders to install at least 100 boulders to discourage use of a playing field.

[00:42:04] One week later, FCPA declared it a mistake and had the boulders removed. So how much did this cost taxpayers. Sidewalks. A planned sidewalk on the south side of Peace Valley Lane in our precious green space of Justice Park and across from Justice High School is unneeded and unwanted by the community and environmentally damaging. The community requested a sidewalk 10 years ago and the need was fulfilled. A sidewalk was installed on the high school side of the street

[00:42:43] Yet, apparently due to a lacking communications among departments, the county intends to spend \$900,000 for 825 feet of sidewalk. Although funds have been spent for design, you can stop this damaging and duplicative project.

[00:43:02] So I urge county leadership to recognize taxpayer funding is not endless, to spend wisely the monies entrusted to you, and to reduce our FY27 real estate tax rate. Thank you.

[00:43:18] Thank you. Our next speaker is David Edelman, who is speaker number 12, to be followed by Patty Klein and Julian DePhillips. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and fellow members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is David Edelman.

[00:43:34] I'm speaking on behalf of Invested in Fairfax. We are a coalition of local groups advocating on the budget and services in Fairfax County that include PTA, small business, general county employees, unions, as well as many others.

[00:43:52] This is our 10th year in existence and my 10th year testifying. We want to recognize that the national and local economy is in a very hard part of uncertainty, and that makes it hard to budget when you don't know what's going to happen in the economy.

[00:44:11] But I believe I've stood here in worse times. I believe we do have the funds to provide needed services to our community and fund our four collector bargaining agreements in Fairfax County. And, you know, we continue to need to set priorities with our strategic plan, but I think we're doing that.

[00:44:34] I think we continue to be admired for our schools and services and to be a good place to live and work at Fairfax County. A couple of things that our members are concerned about, the teachers unions wanted us to talk about the state budget.

[00:44:53] as we know in many years, has not been finalized, their biennium budget, and there may be a shortfall. And if there is a shortfall, that the state, as they ask for some help in filling that gap, if the state does not come up with the expected money.

[00:45:11] The other thing I would like to talk about that's already been talked about by several other speakers is the promise 2% for affordable housing. This is a particular issue for the NAACP, which is a member of our coalition, and they wish to see us reach that goal.

[00:45:33] I admire the housing that's being built on this very property as I drive up here, and I think that's great, but I know that that's not going to be enough. And we continue to look forward to working with you in the upcoming year. Thank you. Thank you, David. Our next speaker is Patty Kline, to be followed by Julian DePhillips and Lenore Stanton.

[00:45:56] Good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Patty Kline, and I am the Executive Director of Rebuilding Together Arlington Fairfax Falls Church.

[00:46:13] I'm here to urge you to fully fund the low-income or low-moderate-income home repairs pilot program which is proposed for elimination in the fiscal year 2027 advertised budget for 38 years rebuilding together has partnered with fairfax county to provide critical home repairs and accessibility modifications to more than 2200 low-income homeowners helping them remain safely in their homes this is one of the most cost-effective affordable housing strategies available preserving existing housing stock, while protecting the health, safety, and dignity of our neighbors.

[00:46:52] In '24, this board took a deliberate step to move forward toward a more stable, predictable funding structure for these essential services, adding \$350,000 to HCD's baseline budget for a competitively awarded non-profit contract, while removing home repairs from the CCFP.

[00:47:14] Following that competitive process, HCD awarded Rebuilding Together a two-year contract in December of 24 with three one-year renewal options. Included in your packet is our one-year home repair program contract report, which many of you have previously received.

[00:47:35] What makes our model distinctive is both its comprehensive and cost-effectiveness. We serve low-income homeowners of all ages across every housing type, from manufactured homes, high-rise condominiums, townhomes, single-family houses.

[00:47:52] We conduct a thorough home assessment to identify health and safety hazards and develop tailored scope of work. Our repairs range from installing grab bars and railings, improved lighting to help someone age and play safely, to a range of handyman-type repairs, to stair lifts, wheelchair ramps, other urgent accessibility modifications. There is no hard dollar cap per home. We invest what is needed with the funds available and when a repair requires specialized expertise, we bring professional contractors for complex work such as roofs, HVAC systems, and major plumbing. Our cost-effectiveness is

[00:48:31] driven in large part by those volunteers right there whoa and deeply committed individuals many with decades of experience who allow us to significantly leverage County funding and serve more homeowners than our budget would make possible in the first year of our contract we completed a thousand seventy repairs on 113 homes 91 households through the contract and 22 with additional funding. We leveraged more than 4,500 hours of volunteer labor

[00:49:06] valued at \$272,000 or 77% above the contract funding and secured thousands of dollars in donated materials and appliances. The consequences of eliminating this funding would be severe. 75% or more of the households we currently serve in Fairfax County would lose access to critical services. HCD's contract represents about 40% of our total cash budget. Its loss would significantly impact our capacity of our organization to deliver services and undermine AC rescue program which we operate with the Office of Environmental

[00:49:43] and Energy Coordination. To understanding what this funding means in human terms, consider the following: In her thirties, Ms. O became a wheelchair user almost overnight due to MS. She shared, I feared being trapped in my home during a fire or injured from a fall because it's not accessible. Thanks to rebuilding together, those barriers are gone and I can safely live in my home. Ms. D has lived in her manufactured home community her entire life. When her floors began to collapse, she had nowhere to turn.

[00:50:16] No other organization would take on the repairs. We stabilized her home, added safety features, and help ensure she could pass inspection and remain in her home she's always known. A 74-year-old double amputee who is hearing impaired could not safely move through his home.

[00:50:32] We installed stair lifts, widened doorways, and added critical safety features, making his home accessible, safe, and livable. I respectfully urge you to restore and sustain funding for this program in 2027 and beyond through the current contract with Rebuilding Together, ensuring Fairfax County community members have consistent, reliable access to critical home repair services.

[00:50:54] For a modest, proven investment, we can continue to help older adults age safely in place, make homes accessible for people with disabilities, protect families from health and safety hazards, and preserve affordable housing for future generations.

[00:51:11] Thank you. Thank you, Patty, and thank you all for being out here. Figure number 14 is Julian DePhillips, to be followed by Lenore Stanton and Alyssa Batchelor-Causey. Welcome. Good afternoon. My name is Julian DePhillips.

[00:51:30] I'm a long-time Mason District resident, and I'm here representing the ASSB. So the Advisory Social Services Board is a state-mandated board, and we meet with DFS monthly to receive updates and make recommendations on policy matters.

[00:51:46] We typically meet in the Panino Building, which is currently closed due to water damage, we hope to return soon. The ASSB commends DFS on its resilience in returning to its assistance from a distance model that it developed in 2020. DFS has over 50 programs and services across four main divisions. Adult and aging, children, youth, and families, domestic and sexual violence services, and public assistance and employment services. DFS services prevent the need for more costly intervention down the line. Fairfax County is able to keep many at-risk children and adults at home and with family through the work done by DFS.

[00:52:22] The ASSB thanks the Board of Supervisors for their continued commitment to essential human services programs, as reflected by the current funding levels and the previously approved appropriation of \$1.5 million of state revenue to support public assistance and employment services and adults in aging as workloads increase.

[00:52:40] The 2027 budget contains close to \$3 million of reductions in DFS programs from 2026, And this is the third year that DFS has been asked to make cuts of around 3%. This year's decrease in funding is projected to eliminate four positions. Services will be eliminated primarily from children, youth, and families, and adult and aging divisions.

[00:53:01] The majority, \$2 million, of the reduction will be achieved by aligning the budget for mandated CSA services to actual spending. This is a testament to the effectiveness of preventative services.

Unfortunately, half a million dollars of the reductions will come from highly visible and beloved programs in support of older residents.

[00:53:18] The print edition of the Golden Gazette will be eliminated, which many residents rely on as an offline guide to county and private resources. The home-delivered meals program will be reduced by more than half to five meals per week. This doesn't reduce the number of visits to the home. It is a cut to the food cost down to state-mandated levels.

[00:53:34] The ASSB understands the tradeoffs that DFS is making to apply the proposed budget reductions, focusing cuts on vacant positions and minimizing impacts to service delivery where possible. By aligning funding with actual spending and reducing non-mandated services, DFS expects to meet its core objectives in 2027, but will be doing so with reduced quality and capacity.

[00:53:57] In consideration of future budgets, DFS is running low on non-mandated services to cut. The ASSB stresses that DFS services are preventative and reduce expense in other areas, such as emergency response for home situations, that fully funded DFS services could have addressed.

[00:54:14] The ASSB again thanks the Board of Supervisors for prioritizing the welfare of our county's residents and requests that the 2027 budget avoids further cuts to DFS funding and restore funding where possible, seek to identify additional sources of revenue rather than further reducing the capacity of the county to support its residents through Health and Human Services, and continue spending to support county child care services regardless of department. Thank you.

[00:54:38] Thank you. We are now on speaker number 15, Lenore Stanton, to be followed by Alyssa Batchelor-Cozzi Anne Forno. Welcome, Lenore. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the board. I'm Lenore Stanton, and I am the chair of the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

[00:54:58] And I'm here today representing the RHA on this important matter. I would like to start by expressing the board's extreme and profound gratitude for your consistent, our boards, for your boards' consistent support and your courageous leadership on an issue that defines the very character of this county, affordable housing.

[00:55:17] Leadership alone is not about managing the status quo, but it's about having the vision to see the community that we want to be and then having the resolve to build that community. This board has moved beyond rhetoric and you've moved into the realm of making things a reality and some meaningful action.

[00:55:33] By setting the goal of 10,000 new affordable housing units, you sent a clear signal to our partners and residents that Fairfax County is a place where everyone has a seat at the table. Your willingness to prioritize housing is a testament to your understanding that a thriving economy is built on the foundation of stable homes in everybody's neighborhood.

[00:55:54] It's this specific brand of leadership that's allowed us as the board to make such tremendous progress towards our goals thus far. We see the fruits of this leadership in projects like Fairfax Crest, right outside the windows of this great building. It's an amazing development, and we're all very proud of it.

[00:56:12] And it's a prime example of how the board's vision turns underutilized assets, in this case a couple of parking lots, into vital community resources. Fairfax Crest is on track to deliver 279 affordable

multifamily homes for families earning between 30% and 70% AMI.

[00:56:30] It will deliver 15,000 square feet of community space, including an on-site child care center, newly named Carrie's Corner, after our cornerstones, wonderful chairman, to support working parents.

[00:56:45] And it also will offer a sustainable, walkable neighborhood designed to help residents put down roots right here in our county. This project, Fairfax Crest, is anticipated for completion by the end of this year. I can't believe it's already. I feel like we just topped it off.

[00:57:02] And it happens when the board provides the political will and the financial framework to leverage private and public investments. In FY2026, you showed your commitment to increasing funding by increasing the funding to one and a quarter pennies. Today, our board asked you to maintain that ongoing momentum.

[00:57:21] Currently, there's an unallocated balance, as we've heard, of \$23 million in the county executive's advertised budget. We urge the board to dedicate an additional quarter penny, roughly \$9 million, to our baseline funding for housing. This incremental increase will continue our progress in three important ways.

[00:57:39] First, it will help close the supply gap, which we all are very aware of. It will provide immediate relief for families facing a housing crisis. Second, it will leverage investment. As every dollar of baseline funding coming from the county, it acts as a magnet for federal grants and private equity that invests in us.

[00:58:00] And it's seen with the public-private funding, which is fueling Fairfax Crest right outside. Private equity investors in our projects, they do not happen by accident. We have those investors because investors know our vision, they know your vision, and they know that they'll have a predictable, dedicated local funding stream stemming from you throughout their projects.

[00:58:22] The third progress that we can make with some incremental increase here is to support our workforce. We can ensure that low and moderate income workers, including those actual workers who serve our county, can actually afford to live here in the county. As the board is aware, by funding this quarter penny now, we will decrease the much higher long-term costs of housing instability and emergency services, that will definitely result.

[00:58:47] Every home we build today eventually will contribute back to the tax base and back to our local economy, which is one of our founding visions, one of our visions on our board, and we know that. Predictable scaled resources are the engine of our 10,000-unit goal. Let's continue making Fairfax crests all over this county.

[00:59:05] Let's put them in every corner of this county. We urge the board to prove this increase and to continue your visionary work, and you've started for us. Thank you for your tireless and continued effort towards our housing goals in this county. Thank you very much for your partnership. Thank you, Lenore.

[00:59:21] Speaker number 16 is Alyssa Batchelor-Causey to be followed by Ann Forno and Rhonda Moore. Welcome. Thank you. I'm just going to warn you guys I'm experiencing some sort of allergy attack right now, so I hope I can get through this without incident. We can relate.

[00:59:38] Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Alyssa Batchelor-Causey. I'm the chair of the Fairfax County Commission for Women. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on the county's proposed budget. We commend the county for continued

investment in public schools, emergency housing, food assistance, and community-based services that support residents in times of need.

[00:59:59] As you know, the commission is focused on improving access to physical and mental health services and advancing women and girls' economic mobility, core priorities of our strategic plan that are grounded in the county's gains, gaps, and goals study. Just a few weeks ago, the Commission for Women celebrated Women's History Month by reflecting on the theme of building sustainable futures.

[01:00:17] Sustainability extends beyond environmental concerns. It speaks to the ability of our systems to endure and meet the needs of our community over time, and it is through that lens that we offer our perspective on the budget. As we reviewed the FY27 proposed budget, we are concerned about the sustainability and cumulative impact of the proposed reduction on women and girls and their ability to access critical services and maintain economic stability. Broadly, the Commission requests that the Board of Supervisors fully fund programs that provide health services, housing support, and accessible information to residents. In particular, we would like to highlight four areas that we believe should be prioritized and protected. First, we would like to highlight the impact the proposed

[01:00:57] budget has on senior women. Women aged 65 and older make up more than 130,000 residents across Fairfax County. Of these, approximately 7,000 women live at or below the poverty line, and many more are living on fixed incomes with little financial flexibility. The proposed reduction of the Home Delivered Meals Program from 11 meals per week to 5 per week represents a meaningful loss of consistent nutritional support. For many, access to consistent nutrition and routine services is directly tied to their ability to remain independent. Senior women are more likely to live longer, live alone, and experience economic insecurity. Over time, reductions like this can

[01:01:33] contribute to increased isolation, poor health outcomes, and greater reliance on more costly emergency services or institutional care. Secondly, the commission is focused on housing stability as a key component of economic mobility and long-term well-being. The proposed elimination of the low and moderate income home repair program removes a critical resources that helps homeowners maintain safe and stable living conditions. This program supports the county's broader goal of preserving affordable housing, including manufactured homes, one of the county's most vulnerable housing types. In a high-cost region like Fairfax County, even minor repairs can quickly become financially unmanageable, and without these supports, small maintenance

[01:02:12] issues can escalate into larger housing challenges, increasing the risk of displacement or unsafe living conditions. Next, Fairfax County has a strong network of services and community partners that provide critical care. However, those services are only as effective if residents can find them and they can trust the information that's available. The Human Services Resource Guide plays a critical role as a centralized access point for residents seeking services. Over the past year, the commission has worked extensively to improve its accessibility and usability. The proposed elimination of a staff position responsible for managing and maintaining this guide raises significant concerns, as it risks reducing

[01:02:51] the guide's accuracy, consistency, and long-term usability. From the commission's perspective, this change would not only impact residents, it would also significantly set back our work to improve access to services and reduce barriers across the system. Even small gaps in maintenance or coordination can make these services harder to access.

[01:03:09] Finally, we want to highlight a proposed elimination of three full-time positions within the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office. We are concerned about the impacts that this would have on victims of domestic and sexual violence. Reduced staffing can lead to delays, increased caseloads, limited ability to support victims navigating the legal system.

[01:03:26] This is especially concerning that during periods of economic uncertainty are often associated with increased rates of domestic violence. Women and children in Fairfax County deserve timely protection and support, especially in moments of crisis. Maintaining adequate staffing is essential to ensuring that these cases are handled with the urgency and care that are required.

[01:03:48] As we approach America's 250th anniversary, we are reminded of Abigail Adams' words to, quote, remember the ladies. and in the same spirit, the Commission for Women asks you all to remember the ladies of Fairfax County as well when improving this budget. When public services are scaled back, the impacts and burdens of responsibility often shifts onto families and caregivers, the majority of whom are women. From the Commission's perspective, sustainability means ensuring that our systems continue to support residents in a way that is stable, accessible, and equitable over the long term. We do that by investing and strengthening our core infrastructure that supports health, safety, and independence. We recognize that this budget reflects difficult trade-offs. However,

[01:04:26] we encourage the board to not only consider individual reductions, but their cumulative impacts, particularly on those who are most vulnerable to gaps in services. The Commission for Women stands ready to partner with the board and county staff to advance health access, economic stability, and long-term community well-being. Thank you so much for your time.

[01:04:43] Thank you. Speaker number 17 is Anne Forno, to be followed by Rhonda Moore and Michelle Sullivan. Welcome. Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity. It's nice to be with you all again. Thank you for your service. It's still very intimidating the second time, so I'm going to do my best. I'm Anne Forno, director of the Virginia Preschool Initiative. I'm the manager for the grant, and I oversee its implementation in our community-based sites, such as ACCA, Laurel Learning, the former Seven Corners Children's Center, and United Community Children's Center.

[01:05:20] I'm here to ask you to please keep the position of Access and Family Partnership Manager, part of Fund 40045, Early Childhood Birth to Five. This position, Access and Family Partnership Manager, is currently held by Rhonda Moore, who's speaking right after me.

[01:05:38] She is my direct supervisor, and there are many reasons to keep this position and to keep Rhonda. I rely on her guidance and her expertise as a longtime early childhood expert and leader for my work supporting our 47 community VPI sites.

[01:05:54] I believe that Rhonda's values, approach, and leadership style are vital in the early childhood programs and services, formerly called the Office for Children Leadership Landscape. As one of five leaders who collectively oversee Head Start, VQB5, VPI, Mixed Delivery, and more, and the only black woman in our leadership, her contributions are needed.

[01:06:20] In particular, she's committed to ensuring that our work is guided by the equity and accountability principles that NCS leadership has identified as important. And her work on access to early care and education is directly linked to the county's newly released strategic plan for early childhood.

[01:06:41] I would also like you to consider the impact this elimination would have on workloads and the risk it poses to the grant's administration. To quote from your agency reductions document released with the proposed budget, this responsibility of her work will be absorbed by the other co-lead of the Ready Region grant, as was the original intent of the grant.

[01:07:06] Any additional duties can be distributed to other staff as needed. I imagine you're much like us. You don't have time for any additional duties on your plates. We don't on ours. So while the Ready Region grant was initially intended to have one manager, Rhonda's position, the Access and Family Partnership manager, was asked to support the grant after the county was told that the grant requirements were not being met under that one-person structure. Eliminating this manager risks the grant requirements not being met again.

[01:07:37] In addition, given our current duties, it is debatable that ECPS staff can absorb any additional work, further risking the grant requirements going unmet. Please show us that you value the great human services we provide for residents while also valuing the humans who provide those services.

[01:07:54] Please keep the merit position of Access and Family Partnership Manager. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 18 is Rhonda Moore to be followed by Michelle Sullivan and Jim Edmondson. Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the Board.

[01:08:11] My name is Rhonda Moore, and I serve as the Director of Access and Family Partnership with Early Childhood Programs and Services. I am here today because I am the face of the proposed elimination, the position elimination under Fund 445. I joined ECPS, then OFC, in early 2023 with a clear purpose to continue serving this community and its families.

[01:08:32] Shortly after my arrival, NCS-ECPS leadership asked me to co-lead the Ready Regents Capital Area systems coordination work and to collaborate closely with our school readiness colleagues to implement the Ready Regents State grant. Since then, I have worked to strengthen family engagement and access across early childhood systems.

[01:08:50] As the Early Childhood Family Engagement Coordinator and now as Director of Access and Family Partnership, I have led our Ready Regents team to coordinate enrollment efforts so families can find secure, high-quality early childhood options more easily, elevated family council voices so that families help shape Ready Regents' capital area decisions, increased enrollment slots for mixed delivery, expanding access for children who need it most, guided and supported our VPI leadership and team of strengthened program systems, contributing to a successful 2025 state audit, build strong partnerships with community

[01:09:26] organizations such as All Ages Read Together, and helping them reach underserved populations in Fairfax County. Equity is central to my work. I was selected to represent ECPS in the NCS community of practice, focused on social change through the equity lens across all NCS units.

[01:09:43] Within my own teams, I have worked to model and share accountability framework to ensure our work stays grounded in fairness, transparency and impact. I also played a role in the development of our new early childhood strategic plan, Strong Foundations, Bright Futures. This plan lays out the vision for a comprehensive family-centered early childhood systems in Fairfax County.

[01:10:03] If my position is eliminated, critical work tied to this plan, including building and sustaining family partnerships and community engagement, will be diminished or lost. There is still much to do. I

am committed to fully executing the strategic plan, and I will continue to support my Ready Regions Capital Area co-lead in carrying out the RRCA work, and this is precisely the time when the county needs strong, stable leadership to align county priorities with state-level systems.

[01:10:30] I was hired in 2023 to do this work on behalf of the county, and I'm asking for the opportunity to continue the work by building an equitable early childhood family partnership hub that links and connects the Capital Area Ready Regions work with the county's early childhood system. This hub would ensure that no matter where a family enters our system, they experience coordinated, responsive, and culturally affirming support. Families are at the heart of all that we do. I am a single mother of a wonderful, curious seven-year-old. It is my responsibility to secure her future and to help build a community she will one day contribute to herself. I am remaining deeply committed to Fairfax County, to the strategic vision, and to our families. I respectfully ask

[01:11:08] that you reconsider the elimination of my position so that we can continue the work we have started and fully realize the promise of strong foundations and bright futures. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you. Speaker number 19 is Michelle Sullivan, to be followed by Jim Edmondson and Karen Corbett-Sanders.

[01:11:27] Welcome. Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the Board. My name is Michelle Sullivan, and I am the Executive Director of All Ages Read Together, a nonprofit that provides free preschool classes directly in the communities we serve, in donated spaces such as community centers and libraries.

[01:11:48] I am here today to request that full funding is restored for All Ages Read Together classes in Fairfax County under Neighborhood and Community Services. I'd like to begin with a grounding truth.

[01:12:04] Kindergarten today is not what it once was. When a child walks into kindergarten on their first day, They're expected to be ready to participate in a structured classroom environment, like sitting in a group and following routines.

[01:12:22] That level of readiness does not happen automatically. It comes from early learning experiences before they enter kindergarten. In Fairfax County, nearly one in five children enters kindergarten without preschool experience.

[01:12:41] Many of those families are defined as Alice families, working households who earn too much for publicly funded preschool, but not enough to afford other options. If that term existed when I was four years old, my family would have been considered an Alice family.

[01:13:01] I was raised by a single mother who worked full time at a baby food factory. She was doing everything right, but with very limited financial flexibility. I was a painfully shy child. My mother made the decision to pay for me to go to preschool because she believed it would help me grow.

[01:13:24] That was not an easy decision. It was a sacrifice. I still remember the first day of class hiding behind my mom. My teacher was so kind as she welcomed me and took my hand to join the class.

[01:13:41] My mom's decision to send me to preschool changed my life because it was the place where I found my voice. It was where I began to build confidence and feel a sense of belonging. Today, that same opportunity is out of reach for many working families in Virginia because preschool access is not guaranteed for all families.

[01:14:08] This creates a gap. Families make too much to qualify for publicly funded programs, but not enough to afford other options. This is where art operates, serving families whose children are more likely to enter kindergarten without that foundation.

[01:14:27] Through this partnership, Fairfax County is able to expand access to preschool without constructing new facilities, leveraging community-based settings to increase participation, and aligning with kindergarten readiness goals.

[01:14:47] Art is not duplicating services. We are a complementary service reaching families who are not being served by publicly funded preschool. At ART, each week we focus on a developmentally appropriate book that helps children build the skills they need for kindergarten.

[01:15:06] Each class is a chance for children to practice routines and learn in a group setting. This is how they build confidence, independence, and classroom readiness. At the end of the week, each child takes home a copy of the book, and by the end of the program, they will have at least 30 new books for their at-home library.

[01:15:30] This is what access makes possible, and what is at risk without it. If funding is restored, you are expanding access to early learning for children in your districts. There are two important things to know.

[01:15:47] First, for every dollar invested by Fairfax County, ART is generating nearly \$2 in additional community resources. And second, we know our program works because each student completes a pre- and post-assessment to measure impact.

[01:16:08] Last year, 94% of arts-rising kindergartners were considered school-ready based on assessment results, which are aligned with Virginia's early learning standards. On average, students demonstrated a 47% gain in language and literacy skills.

[01:16:33] These may seem like small things, but they form the foundation children need for kindergarten. And when children are not prepared for kindergarten, teachers and schools must adjust. You will hear testimony from art educators, volunteers, and community leaders about what readiness looks like in the classroom and what happens when that readiness or that foundation is not in place.

[01:16:58] Over 70 parents have submitted written testimony as well. And one line stood out because it mirrors my own story. My son was very shy before Art, and now he is confident, active, and willing to try things he didn't do before.

[01:17:18] Confidence leads to curiosity. Curiosity leads to learning, and learning opens doors to opportunities for children to reach their full potential. In closing, Fairfax County should be lauded for the foresight to address the gap with a preventable solution.

[01:17:39] ART does not duplicate existing services and reaches children who are most likely to enter kindergarten without any preschool experience. ART is a modest investment with a meaningful return. It supports children, strengthens classrooms, and helps ensure that more children in your districts have the opportunity to start strong.

[01:18:03] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We're on speaker number 20, Jim Edmondson, to be followed by Karen Corbett Sanders and Kenneth Russell. Welcome. Thank you. My name is Jim Edmondson. I'm a longtime resident of McLean and an affordable housing developer.

[01:18:25] First, let me thank you as a group and individually for recognizing my late wife, Jane, after her death in September. Thank you for acknowledging her wonderful work for John Faust, for the county, and for our community.

[01:18:43] As some of you have said, she was a quiet force of nature. I miss her terribly, as you can imagine. I know that you have seen me before you on the subject of affordable housing. I'm here for a repeat performance.

[01:19:02] I started my work in developing and operating affordable housing in 1981 and did my first deal in Fairfax with the FCRHA in 1982. Happily, it and my other work in the county continue to serve low and moderate income households.

[01:19:22] None of it would have been possible without the financial and legislative support of the county. I recognize that budgets are tight and not only among the affordable developers and suppliers of certain essential services for our residents, but for the county itself.

[01:19:43] You supervisors and the senior staff of the county recognize the needs and the shortfall in what we can deliver. My company, Wellington Development, has received funding commitments in the last year and, not surprisingly, received more.

[01:19:59] I have described in the past how financing of low-income housing tax credits provides the primary tool for the production of affordable housing here. Financing of these properties is layered, sometimes four or five sources deep.

[01:20:17] It starts with a county commitment for subordinate debt, large amounts of subordinate debt, which has to be awarded so that our applications for financing to the state are deemed credible.

[01:20:35] Without the awards of the county, our applications fail. If Virginia Housing, the state agency, says yes to us, then we layer on large amounts of LIHTC equity provided by banks and syndicators.

[01:20:52] attached to the equity is first mortgage debt with cheap subordinate parallel financing from the state. An apartment unit in Northern Virginia costs about \$350,000. That's a lot. And that's probably on the low side. Renting a one-bedroom unit for \$1,200 per month won't permit us to finance that kind of housing with conventional debt. We usually seek funding from other sources such as local foundations and major corporations like Amazon.

[01:21:27] The lower the rents we charge to serve the most vulnerable in the community, the greater the amount of free capital required for the project, and the county is absolutely critical for that. The larger the amount of the county's annual contribution from general revenue funds to the housing trust fund, the more units we and our peers can provide.

[01:21:51] The corollary rule, if the county approves loans to very expensive projects because land and construction costs are high, then fewer units get built. So we urge you in approving project financing to make sure the allocations from the trust funds are relatively low for each project.

[01:22:10] That's a hard task. Sometimes it means foregoing a project in a terrific location that requires maximum allocations in return for another project in a more pragmatic location.

[01:22:31] Tyson's offers some examples of that, as I'm sure you're aware. So I urge you to squeeze more money into the trust funds over the next several years, even when it's uncomfortable to do so. And along with it, please provide money for social services to the residents, which are also essential.

[01:22:50] If you have surpluses in any particular year, please prioritize the leftovers for additional contributions to the housing trust fund. Then we'll deliver for you. I'd note something that you probably already know.

[01:23:10] We are blessed with a terrific housing department. Its leadership and dedication are beyond competent. Similarly, we have a wonderful state housing agency. We need to take advantage of that and provide the support for affordable housing that the community needs.

[01:23:30] Thank you very much. Thank you, Jim. And we miss Jane every day as well. So thank you for reminding us. She's here in spirit. Thank you. Our next speaker is Karen Corbett-Sanders, to be followed by Kenneth Russell and Karen Vasquez.

[01:23:47] Welcome, Karen. Good afternoon, and if I could take a point of personal privilege, I do want to thank every one of you for your very kind words about the recent passing of my mother. It's greatly appreciated. It makes my heart sing.

[01:24:02] So good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the board. My name is Karen Corbett-Sanders, and I previously served as the chair of the Fairfax County School Board. I have spent many years working within our public education system and understand both the opportunities and constraints our schools face. As a former school board member, I can tell you that our system is built to move students forward. Public education is designed as a continuum, with each stage building on the one before it.

[01:24:37] When that early foundation is in place, schools can focus on helping students grow and progress. When it's not, schools must first spend the time establishing that foundation before they can move students forward. We see that most clearly in kindergarten.

[01:24:58] Today's kindergarten classrooms are structured environments where children are expected to participate in group learning, follow routines, and begin developing their early academic skills. But not every child enters with the same level of preparation. Some students have the foundation to begin learning on day one, while others are still learning how to be in a classroom setting at all. In a classroom of 20 or more students, that difference matters. Teachers are asked to meet students where they are, but that means balancing a wide range of readiness levels

[01:25:34] from the very beginning of the school year. That affects instruction, pacing, and ultimately student outcomes. This is not a reflection of the effort on the part of the schools, the teachers, or even the students. It's a reflection on access. Not every family has access to preschool, and even in a strong system like Fairfax County, there are children who arrive at kindergarten without that early exposure. That is why all ages read together, art plays an important role in the system. Art is not duplicating services, nor is it competing for families who are

[01:26:11] being served with publicly funded preschool programs. It is complementing the systems by reaching families who are not currently being served by existing preschool options, helping to ensure more children enter school with foundation in place. From a systems perspective, this is a practical and cost-effective approach. It helps ensure that more children enter school with the foundational skills they need, which supports both students and teachers. As someone who has worked within the system, I see art as part of the broader solution. It fills a gap in what is a

[01:26:49] community-based, flexible, and responsive to family needs. Each of you have received information about this program, and I encourage you to look at it. I would also let you know that it's not in

my remarks, but it is important to understand that these are inclusive classrooms where our students learn from each other with neurodiverse skills, and that is critical.

[01:27:12] Thank you. Thank you, Karen. Speaker number 22 is Kenneth Russell to be followed by Karen Vasquez and Jacqueline Bollineau. Welcome. Good afternoon.

[01:27:28] My name is Ken Russell. I'm a lifelong resident of Lorton. I've been told it's a very desirable place to live. Just don't try to go anywhere. Today, to get from the 95 underpass to Silverbrook Road, which has got to be around 1,000 feet, took a half hour.

[01:27:47] The ever denser housing developments are only adding to this problem. Not to mention Lorton Road and Old Colchester Road are the only ways around, and Ox Road, of course, from the other direction, the only way around Lorton to continue your journey south.

[01:28:06] It jams up very quick. I understand that BOS is considered part-time. During the Rays hearings, I was told many choose to work full-times. I don't think Fairfax County part-time workers have this ability.

[01:28:22] Nine BOS members make more than 12 state governors. The chair makes more than 19 state governors. And he's only \$19 behind the 20th. These are 20, 25 figures. After the hearing on the chairman being on the Kojo Nami show, which I truly enjoyed, and considering the history of the meal stacks, I inquired about, he said he didn't want a referendum vote for the casino.

[01:28:55] So I inquired, what would happen if the casino referendum, the referendum requirement was done away with, as was the meals tax? I did not get back the answer. I did get back the history of the meals tax. I know it takes dollars to run the county.

[01:29:14] Many residents are in the 50% median income range and below. This year, the average tax per household is \$10,625, and I think 77 cents.

[01:29:33] The breaking point is, I'm past it, and I've lived here my entire life. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 23 is Karen Vasquez, to be followed by Jacqueline Boulinow and Mary Wilkinson.

[01:29:50] Welcome. Good afternoon, chairman and members of the board. My name is Karen Vasquez, and I'm a volunteer with All Ages Read Together in Fairfax County. This is my second year in the Wexford Manor class, located within an affordable housing community where many families would not otherwise have access to preschool.

[01:30:15] Each week, I have the privilege of working directly with our kids by reading with them, helping with activities, and supporting them as they learn, and supporting our professional teaching staff. It is one of the most rewarding experiences I've had in my lifetime, And easily the very, very best part of my week.

[01:30:32] I speak today not only as a volunteer, but as someone intimately familiar with county budget processes. Much of my career was spent working for Arlington County government. And I have first-hand experience with the difficult choices that are made during budget season.

[01:30:49] As a department lead, I was often in the position of evaluating organizations and providing recommendations for their funding. I know that a key factor in this process is determining which organizations can leverage their funding to do the most good, and which will provide the most lasting benefits, not only to direct recipients, but who are also poised to benefit the community at large.

[01:31:13] AART is exactly one of these organizations. Not only do I witness the incredible development that each child experiences over the course of our nine-month program, but I also see how that development will continue to benefit them over their entire lifetimes, and how that supports our entire community. At the beginning of the year, some children are still learning the basics of being in a classroom. How to hang up their coats, listen to a teacher, wait their turn. They may not yet know their letters or numbers, and English is often their second language. And yet, in under a year, they will be thrust into a

[01:31:50] fast-paced kindergarten class, often with other kids who have been in preschool for a year or more. In that short amount of time, I get to see literal magic happen. I witness how boundless enthusiasm for learning is rewarded, nurtured, and grown.

[01:32:08] Our kids become more confident, more independent, and more engaged. Children who are hesitant literally transform before our very eyes as they begin to participate, speak up, and interact with their classmates. And the moments that stay with me are when you see that click.

[01:32:24] When they learn their letters, they can count all the way to 20, or even when they can just zip up their coats. They know when they know they've accomplished something, and it's been on their own, and they can say, I did it. Those moments matter, and the joy and self-confidence that comes with it is priceless.

[01:32:43] We know that early childhood is a critical period for development, and much of a child's learning and growth happens before the age of five. We also know that kids who are ready to learn, who love school, and who are confident in their ability to do hard things fare better across their entire lifetimes, becoming adults poised to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Years ago, I heard someone say, there's no such thing as someone else's kids, and that idea has stuck with me. At AART, I see firsthand how this idea is put into practice, benefiting not only individual children, but our community and world

[01:33:20] writ large. I'm asking each of you to embrace that same idea. There is no such thing as somebody else's child and to restore AART's funding so that more children enter kindergarten ready to learn and more families gain access to early learning opportunities that will shape their children's lives. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you for your consideration. Sure. We're on speaker number 24, Jackie Bullenau, to be followed by Mary Wilkinson and James Waller.

[01:33:48] Welcome. Thank you. Good evening, chairman and members of the board. My name is Jacqueline Milano and I am a kindergarten teacher in Fairfax County. Prior to this, I worked as a reading specialist supporting literacy development. I invite you all to imagine that you have just joined an orchestra. When you walk in on your first day, you find everyone else already seated playing together. You are handed an instrument you have never seen before. You do not know how to hold it, how to play it, what it's called, or how to read the music. Yet, you are guided to an

[01:34:24] empty seat and asked to sit down and play. That is what it is like for a child entering kindergarten without preschool. They are being asked to separate from their family, sometimes for the first time, to enter a classroom with unfamiliar routines and expectations. Before they can focus on the learning, they're trying to feel safe. On the other hand, children who have preschool walk in ready to learn. They recognize books, understand routines, and are eager to participate. And in a classroom with 18 to 25 students, the kindergarten teacher is expected to manage both realities at

[01:35:01] once with limited support. On the first day, that can mean helping one child who's overwhelmed and crying for their parent while trying to get the rest of the class settled and ready to learn. That affects everything. It affects how instruction is paced. It affects how much individual attention each child receives and it affects student confidence, especially for those who begin the year feeling behind. Additionally, it affects every child in the classroom, even those who are ready to learn, because my time and focus is elsewhere. In Fairfax County, nearly one in five children enter kindergarten without preschool experience. That is not just a statistic. It's

[01:35:40] something that I experience every day and that we experience every day in our classrooms. Kindergarten isn't designed to be a child's first exposure to structured learning in the way it once was. And this is not just one classroom or one school. It's something all kindergarten teachers experience throughout Fairfax County.

[01:35:59] That's why programs like All Ages Read Together are so important. They are helping to fill the preschool opportunity gap and to reach children and families who would otherwise enter kindergarten with no preschool experience at all. In art classrooms, children are introduced to books each week.

[01:36:14] They practice classroom routines. They learned how to participate in group settings. They build familiarity with sitting in a circle, listening to a story, and engaging with other students. And we see that impact. Last year, 94% of AART's rising kindergartners were considered school-ready based on arts assessment results, which are aligned with Virginia's early learning standards.

[01:36:36] Those may seem like small things, but they make a significant difference when a child walks into kindergarten for the first time. There's an old saying about Carnegie Hall, The only way to get there is to practice, practice, practice. Restoring this funding helps ensure more children in Fairfax County have the practice and foundation they need to be ready to learn on the first day of kindergarten.

[01:36:57] Thank you. Speaker number 25 is Mary Wilkinson, to be followed by James Waller and Cater Gumas. If I called your name, please be ready to testify. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and members of the board.

[01:37:17] My name is Mary Wilkinson, and I am a preschool special education teacher in Fairfax County, as well as the mother of a 33-year-old with autism. I believe in inclusion. I have had the most fortunate experience of being an all-ages read-together inclusive teacher as well, combining children with special needs with community children who have not had a preschool experience.

[01:37:46] As my work as a special education teacher, I have individual education plans and these children receive early intervention services, meaning they need targeted support to build foundation skills.

[01:38:01] We, you, me, their kindergarten teachers, and their classmates want them ready to learn. While all children benefit from extra support from time to time, the children I work with require targeted support to build foundational skills and participate in a classroom setting.

[01:38:21] Some need support briefly, others need it for a longer period of time. Much of my work happens in short focused sessions. I support children one-on-one in small groups, often in their homes, helping them build on specific skills. But those skills are only part of the work. Children, as we know, do not learn how to function in the classroom in isolation. It does not help them to be, you can say it with me,

you keep hearing it, right? Ready to learn. They learn so much more by being around other children, watching, listening, and participating. They need a place to practice

[01:38:59] those skills and take some risks in real time. And that is what makes All Ages Read Together inclusive classrooms so valuable. Through art, All Ages Read Together, I'm able to work with children from my caseload in a group setting where they are learning alongside their peers.

[01:39:19] They are not just practicing isolated skills. They are learning to follow routines, engage with peers, and build confidence in a classroom's environment. There are so many appropriate role models for them to see and work with. I've worked with children who at the beginning of the year will not speak in a classroom setting, who have had tremendous difficulty separating from parents to even enter the classroom.

[01:39:52] But over time, in a supportive and consistent environment, I have watched them engage, interact with peers, and find their voice. This kind of growth does not happen in isolation. While Fairfax County provides a variety of strong early childhood programs, you've heard about many of them today, they are not available to all.

[01:40:15] Art fills that gap. It provides a setting where children can apply what they are learning alongside their peers in a way that supports both their development and their transition to kindergarten. Art is not duplicating services. It is strengthening them.

[01:40:32] Restoring funding helps ensure that more children will have access to inclusive early learning experiences that prepare them for school success. Our goal is to have all children entering kindergarten ready to learn.

[01:40:49] It helps us all. Thank you for your consideration. Thank you. Our next speaker is James Waller, to be followed by Cater Gumis and Hansel Lee. Welcome.

[01:41:07] Good afternoon, Chairman and Members of the Board. My name is James Waller. I'm Secretary of the Friends of Cold and Run Milk. In my presentation, I would like to commend you on your fourth annual report for implementing the strategic plan, fully support the advertised budget for the Park Authority because the parks contribute to six community outcomes mentioned in that strategic plan, and also report that maybe this year there will be a tunnel to somewhere.

[01:41:30] The fourth annual report in implementing the county's strategic plan contains a nifty dashboard of metrics showing what has been achieved and the distance yet to travel. County Executive Brian Hill wisely points out that it's more than just metrics, but the report reflects the values of the Board of Supervisors, and clearly the board values parks.

[01:41:51] The advertised budget indicates the parks contribute to this strategic plan in three of the ten community outcomes. which are the pillars of strength of the county's work. I suggest that there are an additional three county community outcomes to which the budget could refer, and let me explain.

[01:42:08] First, let's look at the three community outcomes mentioned in the budget. Parks' contribution to the community outcome of cultural and recreational opportunities is clear. Ninety-four percent of the county residents live within a mile of the cultural and recreational center, and an average of 72,000 people visit parks every month.

[01:42:25] Parks provide an excellent access to local arts, sports, and cultural opportunities, an indicator of success. Equally obvious is the park's contribution to the community outcome of environment and energy by promoting air, water, and land quality, and supporting sound environmental practices.

[01:42:43] Trees in the park's 24,000 acres reduce greenhouse gases by drawing in carbon dioxide, releasing oxygen. They reduce stormwater runoff and flooding and soil erosion, and they act as a water filtration system with their roots taking out pollutants and purifying groundwater.

[01:43:00] Good stewardship of the park's forests, including attention to invasive species, will help the county achieve its objective of 60% tree canopy cover, up from the current 55%. The proposed news resources in the advertised budget will help fulfill the county's zero-waste mandate by reducing the amount of waste destined for landfill, a sound environmental practice.

[01:43:23] With so many visitors, well-maintained and staffed parks are evidence of the county's efficient and effective government, the third community outcome mentioned in the budget. The new positions in the advertised budget for staffing and maintaining new facilities and overseeing implementation of the sliding fee scale will contribute to even more inclusive community engagement.

[01:43:42] Parks also make significant contributions to three other community outcomes that are not mentioned in the budget. Parks contribute to the healthy community outcome because clearly exercising and spending more time in nature is good for our health. It's not this room, right? The proximity of parks to residents also contributes to housing and neighborhood livability, another community outcome that makes neighborhoods, and the parks makes neighborhoods greener, cooler, and more enjoyable.

[01:44:07] Finally, parks contribute significantly to the community outcome of lifelong education and learning with their myriad educational offerings. In 2025, Colvin Run Mill hosted 3,978 students to learn about simple machines. Summer camps teach the law skills of churning butter and making ice cream.

[01:44:26] Visitors can learn about engineering then and now. They can learn how to boil down sap to make maple syrup. And they'll learn about Sylvester Graham and his cracker. They'll learn about the Kellogg brothers, one of whom favored sugar, took the family name and became great. Tony Tiger there, okay.

[01:44:43] And the announcer of radio station WHO in Des Moines, Iowa, who in 1937 won a contest sponsored by Miller's Washburn and Crosby, and as the best baseball sports announcer, and he won a trip to the Chicago Cubs training camp in Palm Springs, took a screen test, became a movie star, and later president of the United States.

[01:45:06] And I'm talking about Ronald Reagan. So there's lots of lifelong learning left in that old mill. In some, Parks significantly contributed to achieving not three, but six of the community outcomes mentioned in the strategic plan. Finally, I'd like to thank Supervisors Bierman and Alcorn and the University Chairman for your support to build a trail to take advantage of the new tunnel under Route 7.

[01:45:27] The trail will connect the mill portion of the park to the southern part, which actually contains Colvin Run, the water itself, as well as the Old Mill Dam, and lead to the Jerry Connolly Cross County and the Rails to Rivers Trails. Thanks to the Park Authority, Park Authority Board Chair Tim Hackman, and Sue Verizer Bierman, funding from another project in the Rainsville District has been made available to build the trail.

[01:45:49] The Park Authority has completed all studies and surveys and has placed an order for a bridge over Colvin Run. And perhaps by the end of this year, we'll see a trail. So to wrap up, congratulations in progress in implementing the strategic plan. The Park Authority's budget should be approved in full because it plays an important part in achieving six of the ten community outcomes in that plan.

[01:46:09] And thank you for supporting the trail project with vision and the dedication. A tunnel to nowhere can lead to a tunnel to somewhere. Thank you for your kind attention. Thank you. Thank you, James. Speaker number 27. Speaker number 27 is Kader Gumas to be followed by Hansel Lee and Penny Gross. Welcome.

[01:46:29] Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the Board of Supervisors. Thank you for the opportunity to allowing me to speak today. My name is Dr. Kader Gumas. I'm a constituent from Burke, Virginia, a corporate leader and a member of the Fairfax County Council to End Domestic Violence.

[01:46:48] Fairfax County has been my home for the past 26 years. I first arrived as an international exchange participant and quickly fell in love with what Virginia has to offer, a sense of community and such beautiful landscapes.

[01:47:05] Since then, I have built my life here, earning six college degrees, including a Ph.D. and establishing a successful career in government contracting. But my journey has also been shaped by surviving domestic violence, an experience that reshaped my life in ways I never anticipated.

[01:47:24] Through both my lived experience and my doctoral research, I've come to understand something deeply important. Survival is not the end of the story. It is simply the beginning of a much longer journey. Domestic violence is in many ways the gift that keeps on giving, not because it offers anything positive, but because its effects do not end when the abuse stops.

[01:47:49] They continue to surface in a survivor's life, shaping their sense of safety, economic stability, health, employment, relationships, parenting, and overall well-being. Without sustained support, these challenges compound over time and become worse.

[01:48:07] This realization led me to study how survivors move beyond survival and begin to rebuild their lives. And what I found is this, thriving does not happen by chance. It requires a strong support system and sustained investment.

[01:48:24] While our systems play a critical role in crisis response, providing immediate safety and support, they are often not equally designed to sustain survivors through long-term recovery. Part of the reason for this gap is how domestic violence continues to be misunderstood.

[01:48:41] These misconceptions influence our policies, shape our services, and ultimately determine how and whether survivors receive the support they need. And when our understanding is limited, so are the solutions we invest in. That is why our county must prioritize funding for prevention and trauma-informed support services so that vulnerable residents can heal, regain stability, and ultimately thrive.

[01:49:09] This aligns directly with our commitment to upward mobility and the one Fairfax policy lens. But to invest effectively, we must be clear of what domestic violence actually is and what it is not. Domestic violence is not a private matter between two individuals who have marital issues.

[01:49:27] It is a public health issue with criminal and systemic dimensions. It is not limited to physical violence, and it is not something people can simply leave and move on from. And it does not discriminate.

It exists across all communities, all backgrounds, and all socioeconomic levels.

[01:49:46] Domestic violence exists wherever humanity exists. And when we begin to understand the full scope of this issue, the urgency becomes undeniable. One in three women and one in four men have experienced intimate partner violence.

[01:50:03] These numbers are rising, and the implications for our communities are deeply concerning. Here in Fairfax County, we're seeing a disturbing rise in strangulation cases. One of the strongest predictors of homicide, victims who have been strangled face a 750% higher risk of being killed.

[01:50:26] And the consequences do not stop there. Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to experience lifelong developmental challenges, including mental health issues and substance use. This is not just individual harm. It shapes the next generation.

[01:50:45] When we connect these realities, the broader implications become clear. Domestic violence affects public safety, our economy, and the overall well-being of our communities. When survivors lack access to housing, legal support, and mental health care, the effects ripple across our entire county.

[01:51:02] Abuse thrives in isolation and silence, and to counter it, we must come together as a county, as neighbors, and as decision makers to take a clear and unwavering stand against it. Especially now, amid growing uncertainty, we must remain steadfast in our local commitment.

[01:51:21] Domestic violence programs are particularly vulnerable during these times, and yet they remain among the most critical investments we can make. Thank you. I appreciate your time. Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you very much. Our next speaker, kind of speaker, is No. 28, Hansel Lee, to be followed by Penny Gross and Stuart Holt.

[01:51:48] And we're going to give you a minute to set up. We're not counting this in the time.

[01:52:05] My name is Hansel Lee, and again, we're Good Beats, and we're going to begin with a little fun medley.

[01:54:06] So, again, my name is Hansel, no relation to Gretel,

[01:55:28] and that is my wife, Rachel. And we are the co-founders of Good Beats, a music nonprofit with the mission of inspiring, healing, and connecting with music. I, myself, am a former inner-city high school teacher turned physician. My wife, Rachel, is a flautist and a faculty member at Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins.

[01:55:48] And just as you heard music from Mozart, Take On Me, Star Wars, Harry Potter, and Super Mario, we cover a wide genre of music. And since May of 2024, we've performed nearly 150 times at Fairfax County's Adult Day Healthcare, serving those with dementia, physical cognitive disabilities, Children's National, as well as various skilled nursing facilities and memory clinics. We've also held over a dozen public concerts where we've raised and donated over \$40,000 towards other organizations that help

[01:56:24] underserved populations and also towards master classes at Peabody. But what makes us truly unique is that we've recruited nearly 50 classly trained musicians, over 80% with a master's, 40% with their doctorate, and we endeavor to consistently go to these predominantly healthcare venues and to provide high-quality music.

[01:56:46] And in addition to the music, we always have multimedia presentations with visuals and factoids to give context to the songs we're playing. We do sing-alongs. We also give egg shakers and bubble blowers to encourage movement and to give everyone a sense of inclusion and fun.

[01:57:04] And the impact is very, very obvious. There's people singing, dancing, even if it means from their walkers. Even for people who have strokes or dementia, you can see that they really want to vocalize and just really participate in it.

[01:57:20] And sometimes, again, you get the laughing, even being moved to tears. But I think what's really evident is that there's this real, authentic engagement and relationship that's been formed, even just in these two years. And to help maintain this high level of consistent performance, we also have it as our mission to compensate our musicians above union rate.

[01:57:42] It's not at all to take away from the goodwill of the work, but with economic realities, we would really want to support our musicians to feel encouraged, to really focus and have freedom to kind of share their skills, their talents, but also just their heart. That latter thing, some of those ineffable qualities that even just good music alone can't always convey. So we again want to thank, again, Arts Fairfax, the county, for the tremendous support, and we really look forward to growing as an organization. Ashley, through the Arts Fairfax Capital One Partnership, we'll be there September 13th with a really exciting concert we're putting

[01:58:18] together. We look forward to making an even greater impact on Fairfax County. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much, Hansel. And thank you to our wonderful musicians. And that's a tough, tough act to follow. But if anyone can, if anyone can follow that act, anyone can follow that act, it would be our speaker number 29, better known as Penny Gross.

[01:58:50] Welcome. Good afternoon. I am Penny Gross. And I had the privilege of sitting where you are for 28 county budgets, and quite frankly, I miss it. Jerry Connolly and I were the arts supervisors many years ago when the board designated county funding for arts grants administered by the Fairfax County Council on the Arts, now Arts Fairfax.

[01:59:16] Fortunately, that funding has continued as Arts Fairfax has expanded its outreach to new and diverse communities of artists and audiences. And Arts Fairfax has matured and professionalized as a countywide organization with new and enthusiastic staff, as the board indicated it wanted to see.

[01:59:38] Your support has provided a catalyst for current and future opportunities, exemplified by the in-person performance here this afternoon. But the arts need your continuing partnership and advocacy for the 1.2 million residents of Fairfax County.

[01:59:57] The arts are central to our humanity. Arts Fairfax has provided leadership in arts initiatives in every magisterial district. One important and successful initiative is the Mason District Arts Council.

[02:00:14] Now in its third year, a group of talented residents and one non-artistic retired supervisor. The Council Meets Monthly presented the first Mason District Arts Festival last October and is planning the second Mason District Arts Festival for October 17th.

[02:00:35] The council will sponsor or participate in six different local programs celebrating our nation's 250th anniversary in June and July, and it doesn't include any massive arches. A community mural, a

music program, a one-act play contest, a poetry workshop, and partnering with the Nova Lights Chorale for their spring concert.

[02:01:04] Thank you, Supervisor Jimenez, for your support and endorsement of the council and its activities. Most of you know of my decades-long support for the free summer concerts in Fairfax County Parks.

[02:01:20] Sadly, concerts at the Mason District Park Amphitheater, which is the best performance venue in the county park system, have been, yes, have been reduced this year to only eight concerts and only on Friday nights.

[02:01:35] That's down from nearly 30 concerts three years ago, three nights a week. Free concert programs in other magisterial districts also have been reduced. Please prepare and enact a plan to restore these district concerts.

[02:01:54] It's a small expense that will reach thousands and demonstrate that Fairfax County treasures the arts. author kurt vonnegut observed that practicing an art no matter how well or badly is a way to make your soul grow sing in the shower dance to the radio tell stories write a poem even a lousy one it's national poetry month do it as well as you possibly can you will get an enormous reward Thank you.

[02:02:30] Thank you, Penny. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Penny. Thank you for your testimony. Speaker number 30 is Stuart Holt to be followed by Jan DeLucian and Donald Booth.

[02:02:48] If I called your name, please be ready to testify. Welcome, Stuart. Thank you so much, Chairman McKay and the Board of Supervisors. On behalf of Arts Fairfax, the local arts agency for Fairfax County, thank you for the opportunity to speak with each of you today.

[02:03:04] Before I begin, I'd like to thank former Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross and Good Beats Ensemble for their artistry and their testimony. Arts Fairfax gratefully acknowledges the flat funding proposed by the county executive's FY27 advertised budget.

[02:03:20] On behalf of the arts community, many of whom are with us today, thank you for your continued investment in the arts. All of you know that I am a leader who follows through on my commitments. Whether it's serving as a thought partner for possible arts venues or facilitating arts roundtables or even the very glamorous job of mopping down the stage before an arts performance, if I said I will do it, it gets done.

[02:03:52] Last year at this time, I made three commitments to you, and here I am ready to make good on them. Number one, Arts Fairfax will be a resource generator, not a resource drain. Over the past year, Arts Fairfax has worked tirelessly to control and in some cases reduced our operating expenses while increasing fundraising.

[02:04:14] Because of those efforts, I am thrilled to announce that in FY27, we will increase our granting by \$20,000. Number two, in response to the Fairfax Regional Artist Survey, Arts Fairfax will deepen engagement with Fairfax artists.

[02:04:34] We have delivered arts roundtables in all but two districts, bringing together artists, arts organizations, and civic entities to envision the role of the arts in both the district and the county level. We've also ramped up networking opportunities and professional development programs, allowing artists and arts workers to connect and build their skills.

[02:04:56] Number three, Arts Fairfax will grow capacity for public art in creative placemaking. We have invested staff resources in temporary art exhibitions at Springfield Town Center and the Lincone Senior Center, and we are guiding permanent public art installations that are coming to the Braddock and Mount Vernon districts.

[02:05:16] Paired with ongoing conversations about more county sites for exhibitions and prospective murals and sculptures, this work accounts for over 640 hours committed to public art outside our existing services.

[02:05:34] Our efforts, along with the development of the Public Art Master Plan, demonstrate that Fairfax County is ready to invest in Arts Fairfax and advance public art in our communities. By keeping its commitments, Art Fairfax continues to exemplify that the arts are not optional or secondary, and in the end, they don't simply reflect our community.

[02:06:02] The arts have the power to create it, and that power lies in all of our hands. Thank you so much. Thank you, Stuart. We're now on speaker number one, 31, I'm sorry, Jan DeLucian, to be followed by speaker number 32, Donald Booth, if I called your name.

[02:06:24] Please be ready to testify. Welcome. Hello, I am not here about land use. Imagine you're pulling your groceries out of your car and you stand up right into the corner of the car door.

[02:06:42] Your life just went away. Analysis gone. Answering an open-ended question like, what do you want for dinner, is gone. I wasn't knocked out.

[02:06:58] It did not even break the skin. But I could no longer work. And I looked exactly like I do right now. Trouble speaking, trouble thinking things through, takes time. And that was nine years ago.

[02:07:14] I was very independent. I had no resources. Medical bills drained everything. I got on SSDI, and that's all I had. You, Fairfax County, are why I'm here.

[02:07:30] Alive and here. I'm here speaking about rebuilding together. I had no resources. I live in a townhouse in Old Reston, and I had switches that would crackle sometimes if I hit them the wrong way. I had lights that would flicker if I had left the printer on in the other room and somebody tried to print something. I was worried about my electricity. I was worried about the risk of fire. I had no resources to call an electrician who might tell me that I could not live in my

[02:08:07] house anymore. I got a flyer. I called them. They came out and they did that assessment they were telling you about. And two volunteers came and were doing the electrical. They came out and they looked over everything. We came up with a plan of action of things I needed, everything including window reinforcement, because I couldn't afford to replace the windows, but I had gaps. My father

[02:08:44] was living with me and he was going to go out onto the back porch to get away from all that noise. They noticed that he had to grab onto the handle of the wall to be able to get out, to step down onto the patio. They put in a railing there. They put in a step so that he could step down easier.

[02:09:10] They cared. After my stroke last year, they came back and they converted that step into a ramp. So I can sit out there and enjoy it too. Quality of life. It's not just about accessibility. It's not just about safety. It's about caring and it's about life happens because you never know when you're going to need help either. As a single mother of three teenage girls many, many years ago, it takes a village to raise a child. Well, we don't have villages anymore. It's a new world.

[02:09:51] It takes a county. I've been involved with DFS, CSB. I get meals on wheels now. Another story. It's in your packet somewhere, but you get what you pay for, and that's why I've stayed in Fairfax County. I have an ex-boyfriend who regrets the fact that he didn't understand the value of you get what you pay for. So anyway, thank you very much. Thank you, Jan. Thank you for your testimony.

[02:10:26] Speaker number 32 is Donald Booth, to be followed by Natasha Valencia. Mr. Chairman, Honorable Supervisors, I'm Donald Booth, resident of Fairfax County, and I'm here to address the low and moderate income housing repair project, which is currently being run by Rebuilding Together. I'm one of Rebuilding Together's 10 volunteer team leaders, and I want to offer

[02:11:03] three thoughts for you as you consider the finalization of the FY27 budget. First, I urge you to recognize that home repairs are essential to building affordable housing in Fairfax County. I've inspected close to 100 Fairfax County homes over the past four years, and I've seen firsthand the very real hazards that threaten low-income homeowners, their health, their safety, and thus their ability to retain their primary asset, which is their home.

[02:11:39] Repairs that help low-income homeowners stay in their homes are an essential complement to building new housing, new affordable housing, and repairs cost a fraction of the cost of new construction. Older affordable houses, once sold, are often torn down and replaced with much more expensive properties. Moreover, low-income residents lack the resources to move to another home or facility, and safety repairs also reduce demand for fire and EMS services. Second, the

[02:12:15] board's decision on funding for home repairs is not a binary choice of just fund, continue the program as is, or reduce it entirely. I realize the board is facing wrenching trade-offs and balancing the FY27 budget, and I beg you not to approve less than the \$350,000 that Rebuilding Together has used in FY25 and is using again in FY26. In fact, I urge you to consider increasing that amount because a modest additional investment in home repairs makes a significant impact on the

[02:12:54] stock of affordable housing in Fairfax County. Rebuilding Together is ready, able, and eager to serve additional low- and middle-income homeowners of all ages, including those needing some complex and, at times, costly repairs. To better understand Rebuilding Together's cost-effectiveness, I urge you to read the report on year one of their contract to see what was accomplished in FY25.

[02:13:23] And Patty Klein, who spoke earlier, has circulated that to you. Third, I urge Fairfax County to take advantage of the ever-growing group of skilled volunteers who are eager to give back to our community.

[02:13:41] The county's low-income homeowners need help to remain safely in their homes, and that need will only continue to grow. The county can ignore the growing need. It can help directly with county-provided services, and or it can utilize Rebuilding Together's volunteers to maximize the number of residents that can be helped in a timely and cost-effective manner.

[02:14:07] So I urge you to increase, or at least not eliminate, and keep at \$350,000 the budget for Rebuilding Together for FY27. Thank you very much. Our next speaker is speaker number 33, Natasha Valencia, to be followed by Marianela Funes and Odetta Golosil. Welcome.

[02:14:34] Thank you. Good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the board. My name is Natasha Valencia. I am a Fairfax County resident, born and raised in this area. I've lived here all my life. I went to

Chantilly High School. I am a finance professional with 20 years of experience in public education budgeting and federal financial management.

[02:14:56] I am here tonight to ask the board to consider a structural solution to what has become an annual crisis, the funding relationship between Fairfax County and its public schools. Year after year, FCPS presents its budget needs, and year after year, a gap emerges, not because anyone acted in bad faith, but because there's no binding framework.

[02:15:20] that connects county revenue growth to school funding obligations. In FY26, FCPS faced a \$121 million shortfall. Promise teacher raises were trimmed, class sizes increased. Programs that serve our most vulnerable students were cut or threatened.

[02:15:36] This is not a one-time event. It is a structural pattern. FCPS relies on Fairfax County for nearly 71% of its revenue, far above the state average of 50%. The County transfer to schools already represents over half of the general fund, yet each year the school division must make its case as if starting from zero, with no predictability, no guaranteed floor, and no formula tying school funding to the county's fiscal capacity.

[02:16:06] Virginia law already provides a path forward. Under Virginia Code, localities may enter into voluntary revenue sharing and economic growth sharing agreements for fixed time periods. Albemarle County and Charlottesville have operated under such an agreement since the early 1980s.

[02:16:23] What I am proposing is adapting for Fairfax County's context, a formula-based revenue-sharing agreement that dedicates a defined percentage of general fund revenue to FCPS, indexed to enrollment and cost drivers with built-in accountability and transfer provisions for both sides.

[02:16:40] This is not about spending more. It is about spending with predictability. A revenue-sharing agreement would give FCPS the stability to plan multi-year investments in teacher compensation, special education, and student support. It would give this board a transparent, defensible framework for the largest transfer in the county budget.

[02:17:00] And it would give taxpayers confidence that their dollars are allocated through principled formula, not through annual political negotiations. The families in this county moved here because of the schools. The J-Large study found that FCPS is underfunded by approximately \$3,100 per student.

[02:17:19] That's over \$569 million in total. We cannot close that gap through annual budget negotiations. We need a structural commitment. I respectfully ask this board to direct the county executive to study the feasibility of a revenue-sharing agreement between Fairfax County and the schools to engage stakeholders, including parents, educators, and school board members, and designing a framework that reflects our shared commitment to public education.

[02:17:45] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 34 is Marianella Funes. Is she here? So I have speakers 34, 5, 6, and 7 as one block in need of translation services, and they're not here at this point, so I'm going to circle back to them in a moment.

[02:18:03] Do we have speaker number 38, Avril Garland, here? She is here. To be followed by, is Philip LaTassa? Philip LaTassa here? Okay. And Maria Isabel Balavane. Okay, great. We're going to go ahead and take these three testimonies. This will be number 38, 39, and 40. Welcome, Ms. Garland.

[02:18:26] Thank you. First of all, I'd like to thank you for keeping most of the funding for the parks intact. As the population is growing, we desperately need our parks. and my request is that you please restore the 65,000 per year for ecologist one which is needed for the invasive plant management as most of the 17,000 acres of our parks are infested with invasive vines and it is these people that are needed to train volunteers who are actually waiting to do this work but need approval before they can start going in public property and just

[02:19:03] start cutting and pulling. My other request is that you'd totally defund the Cinderbed Road bikeway. This has been on the books I know since 2015, but it is an appalling waste of 18 and a half million of taxpayer money. The first third of it, for one thing, on Cinderbed Road, it's a cul-de-sac. It's a two-lane cul-de-sac with already a sidewalk on one side, and you'd be cutting down some of the belt of trees, taking away shade. The next part of it is through a park

[02:19:43] where the path is eight feet wide. They wanted to send in, they wanted to make the eight feet, the ten feet. This is not necessary. And the worst, the awful part, is going through the Newington conservation site. The locals don't want it. They're very happy with the nature trails, the walking nature trails that they have already.

[02:20:07] And as a cyclist, it is totally unnecessary. There are many local roads that are safe and pleasant and quiet that you can use to get to the metro. And meanwhile, as a commuter cyclist, the roads can be horrendously dangerous.

[02:20:27] One road is Cedar Lane, which is in Supervisor Palczyk's district. It's not your fault, of course. That's your taking your life into your hands, especially at night time. There is no sidewalk on either side, and you end up, you have to just walk on people's property, and sometimes there's a ditch, and the road is fairly narrow.

[02:20:51] Another bad part, this is the last mile up to Route 50. Another part is Nutley Street, the last mile up to Route 50 is pretty dangerous, so much so that a police cruiser stopped behind me, and he said, where are you going, man? I said, I'm going to Safeway.

[02:21:08] He said, where do you live? It's a 917 Health Cross Drive. He said, will you go right back home? I don't want to be hosing you off the pavement. This road is not safe for bikes. So I scared and I went home. And so you need to make the road safe for cyclists before you start paving stream valleys in the woods.

[02:21:29] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 39 is Philip LaTassa to be followed by Maria Isabel Ballivane. Welcome. I speak tonight representing the Friends of Accutane Creek. We always speak on behalf of the natural habitats of our watershed and today also on behalf of our wallets.

[02:21:48] Since the financial crisis of 2008, the Park Authority budget has taken disproportionate cuts year after year. Thank you for going easier on the Park Authority cuts this fiscal year. Thank you for the areas of Park Authority budget that did receive funding increases. We still remain behind where we should be in funding our system of parks.

[02:22:07] The Friends of Accutane Creek have only a few budget requests of Fairfax County that apply now and in the future. Maintain invasive management area funding, maintain natural resource management funding, maintain funding for Hidden Oaks Nature Center, and get rid of the 18-plus million waste of funds, forests, and rare wetlands that would be the Cinderbed Road bikeway.

[02:22:29] Let's work together to ensure a bright future for Fairfax County Parks and the natural heritage they preserve. Thank you. Thank you, Philip. Speaker number 40 is Maria Isabel Balivane, to be followed by Juan Daniel Roque. Welcome.

[02:22:46] Good afternoon, Chairman McKay and Board Supervisors. My name is Isabel Balivian, and I am the Executive Director at the ACA Child Development Center. It is an NAYC-accredited non-profit early childhood program located in Annandale, Virginia.

[02:23:02] Every day, we serve children from diverse backgrounds, including many families who rely on subsidies to access high-quality care. And I'm here today to speak about the proposed budget and its impact on early childhood education.

[02:23:18] I recognize the difficult fiscal environment you are navigating in and the tough decisions you must take. At the same time, early childhood education is not optional. It is essential infrastructure for our community, our workforce, and our future.

[02:23:38] I appreciate the county's efforts to expand access and explore facilities funding. The proposal does not address the most urgent issues we face, the sustainability of the early childhood workforce.

[02:23:56] In community-based programs like ours, we are losing qualified educators to public schools and other sectors because we cannot offer competitive wages. This is not about quality or commitment. It is a structural problem.

[02:24:13] Without targeted investments in compensation, we risk losing the foundation of our early childhood education systems. At the same time, families are struggling. The cost of living continues to rise, and more families need access to affordable care.

[02:24:30] Providers are caught in the middle. We cannot raise wages without raising tuition, and we cannot raise tuition without pushing families out. We are also seeing children who are just not accessing early childhood programs at all.

[02:24:47] When children miss these early learning experiences, it directly impacts their school readiness. The gaps we see in kindergarten begin long before the children ever enter a classroom. I want to acknowledge that more three- and four-year-olds are now being served in school-based settings, which is great.

[02:25:09] This is an important investment. At the same time, it has created an unintended consequence for community-based programs like ours, which are now experiencing lower preschool enrollment. This affects our ability to maintain a balanced and sustainable program.

[02:25:26] It also shifts the type of care that remains. You know, serving infants and toddlers requires different infrastructure, specialized classrooms, lower ratios, and highly trained staff. This is the most expensive care to provide.

[02:25:43] Yet, reimbursable rates do not reflect the true cost of care, not even the cost of quality. It is not financially sustainable to expanding financial care under the current system. Programs cannot cover costs, pay educators fairly, and balance their budgets at the same time.

[02:26:04] Yet, reimbursement rates do not reflect the true cost of quality. It is not... Oh, I'm sorry. And when we talk about inclusion, the gap is even greater. Children with disabilities need smaller group sizes, lower ratios, and additional supports.

[02:26:20] We are committed to serving all children, but we can only do that with adequate funding. Forty percent of the children that we serve have an IEP or an IFSP, and we have them throughout the year. Every time that the schools are closed, we have children that have autism and that have other needs, and we need to meet them with the care and the attention that they deserve.

[02:26:45] We're also seeing that many immigrant families, especially those with U.S.-born children, are afraid to access subsidies due to fear of uncertainty. One in every six children in America is born to an immigrant parent, and these children are citizens that are just not having the same opportunities.

[02:27:10] As a result, eligible children are left out, and the system is not reaching the families it was designed to support. Community-based programs are essential partners in this work. We are ready to collaborate on mixed delivery models and expansion efforts, but partnership requires investment, not only in buildings, but in people and programs.

[02:27:34] I respectfully ask the board to prioritize investment in early childhood education so that educators are better compensated protect and expand access to subsidies while ensuring families feel safe accessing them and include community-based providers as true partners in expansion efforts thank you so much thank you um is we have juan daniel roque here excellent welcome your speaker number 41 welcome good afternoon my name is juan daniel roque valivian but you can call me danny

[02:28:10] Now, I'm the outreach coordinator for Aka Child Development Center in Annandale, Virginia. And, well, I also want to pay a special thanks to Supervisor Jimenez for his recent visit to our center as we welcome Congressman Walkinshaw.

[02:28:26] Now, there's an old saying in political centers that as California goes, so goes the nation. Now, I'm not from California, nor are we in California. I'm a Virginian first and foremost. And I can say that with pride, especially considering this year will mark the 250th since our country declared independence, which just so happened to be drafted by a Virginian.

[02:28:50] The reason I mentioned this is because that Virginian, specifically, was quite young. And so, too, were many others in that cohort of liberty. Our nation was built on those aspirations, on our youth, and in a way, it's our very trademark.

[02:29:07] However, today we're a quite different nation, and rather than embracing the education and nurturing of our young people, we come to focus on the here and now. We think of AI and the risks which accompany it.

[02:29:23] We think of the unemployment levels, our foreign excursions, and what we read on social media or watch on TV, and the inflation that comes along with it all. This makes sense. We don't like to wait. But for education and youth, it's almost a given that we won't see those returns on investment until much later, and through many different degrees of first and second order effects. So often then, it's the first on the chopping block. I'm sure you all understand this. However, if we can finance and provide this education, the return on investment is huge, and it is a positive for so many different people.

[02:30:02] The research at large arrives at this very same conclusion. In one study, Nobel laureate economist James Heckman demonstrated that investing in quality birth-to-five programs yielded a 13% annual return on investment. That's better than the S&P 500.

[02:30:19] With the highest economic and social benefits coming from early skill development at the earliest stages of IFIT toddler care. The kind of care that ACA precisely provides. Beyond the children, however, other studies show that it is not just for their benefit or their future cognitive skills or in reducing crime and youth delinquency or in better social and emotional skills, the kind of skills, mind you, which AI will fail to replace and which employers now seek most, as the World Economic Forum just pronounced.

[02:30:49] It's not just for those reasons that early child care education merits attention here and now. It's also for the workforce at large, for those mothers and fathers who leave their jobs and then are forced to take with them potential economic output as they can't find child care.

[02:31:06] One study found that the average ROI was 90 to 400 percent. Now, we have the opportunity here to do something about it. We can lead again, both our county, our commonwealth, and our country, so that as Virginia goes, so goes the nation.

[02:31:23] Thank you very much. Thank you. Do we have Speaker 42, Brenna Diamantes, here? She is not here. How about Speaker 43, Jenny Chombe? Okay. And Melissa Landeverd?

[02:31:40] Okay. How about Mia Nash? Speaker number 45, if you could come on down. To be followed by Speaker number 46, Megan Bracolone, and Speaker 47, Wilisha Gill.

[02:31:56] If you are here, please come on down close and be ready to testify. Welcome. Good afternoon. My name is Mia Nash, and I'm a junior at Langley High School in McLean. I'm here to strongly encourage increasing funding for Fairfax County libraries in the 2027 budget.

[02:32:16] In the current proposed budget, library funding is reduced by over \$500,000 when libraries are in fact in desperate need of increased funding. New acquisitions in Fairfax County libraries have decreased 26% countywide since 2021.

[02:32:35] Suffering from a serious shortage of nonfiction and reference books, our libraries cannot provide an adequate space for quality research. Today, misinformation spreads rapidly on the internet when blogs and Wikipedia are main research sources.

[02:32:52] Library resources are trustworthy and accessible, but only if we continue to fund them. As a little kid, my parents would take me to our local library at least twice a week, and this wonderful place was where I developed my love of reading that I've carried through all my life.

[02:33:11] By increasing the budget allocation for libraries, you ensure the next generation can also develop this love for reading, reinforcing the importance of accessible education. Our county spends around \$2.49 per resident for book materials.

[02:33:29] In comparison, our peer library system spends around \$6 to \$9 per resident on books, e-books, and other materials. We are lucky to live in one of the nation's wealthiest counties serving a populace which speaks 14 languages and prizes a great school system.

[02:33:49] But libraries here often have to rely on the support of non-profit groups and volunteers simply to survive. I smile every time I see a classmate at my school unwinding with a library book instead of their phone. Yet young people are reading less and less, and it's partly because our libraries cannot match their needs with such limited funding.

[02:34:12] One of the most effective solutions to the harmful effects of social media and the internet is to provide different, enjoyable activities for children and teens to engage in. But I often walk around my local library noticing the lack of new popular titles, especially in the youth section.

[02:34:31] It is these kinds of books that are the key to bringing young people back into reading and out of our phones. Not only does the library provide enriching activities for our community, It functions as a common sanctuary for community building and for human connection.

[02:34:49] However, delayed renovations and even closures at Fairfax County libraries erase an important community space. I urge you all to eliminate the cuts to library funding and instead expand support for these important community institutions, solidifying Fairfax County's commitment to widespread, high-quality education.

[02:35:07] And I thank you for your time and your consideration. Thank you very much. We are on speaker number, I'm going to go speaker 46 through 50. Then I'm going to call one more time the speakers in the block I have, 34 through 37.

[02:35:24] So is speaker number 46, Megan Bracolone here? Megan Bracolone? Okay. How about Wilisha Gill? Yes. And Lisa Dubois-Hedley? Okay.

[02:35:40] And Melissa Jansen? Okay. And Mary Payton I don't see yet. And after Speaker No. 49, Melissa Jansen, we're going to go back to the four that we skipped. Welcome. So, good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors.

[02:35:58] My name is Dr. Walisha Gill. I am a retired educator, having spent over 37 years in the profession as a middle school teacher, middle school assistant principal, middle school principal, and adjunct professor.

[02:36:16] And in my role as adjunct professor, I worked with a number of teachers. I'm speaking on behalf of ART, All Ages Read Together, and I'm respectfully asking that our grant funding be restored.

[02:36:31] Why are these grant funds so important to our work, providing free preschool programs to children who don't have access? Our programs prepare children for kindergarten and allow these individuals to enter school ready to learn, having those early pre-reading, numeracy, and social skills in place.

[02:36:58] The pre-reading skills are so important to teaching reading. Possessing reading skills in the early elementary school grades 1 through 2 is a consistent predictor for school success.

[02:37:14] Educators know that the failure to read proficiently by third grade puts poor children on a trajectory to not graduate from high school. Our programs, though, are not just about preparing children for kindergarten.

[02:37:35] They're about strengthening the early conditions that shape how students engage, learn, and succeed over time. An investment in this funding is also value-added immediately, evident for the kindergarten teacher who must try to teach children who arrive with the necessary readiness skills and those who don't.

[02:38:03] And you heard from the elementary school teacher, the kindergarten teacher, the volunteer, who talked about how important and how valuable it is to send children to school ready, especially with those social skills, and prepare to learn.

[02:38:23] But I talked about my experiences, mostly at the middle school. And so, sadly, I'm all too familiar with children arriving to middle school unable to read. And many of these non-readers were from households where children simply didn't have access to early childhood education programs.

[02:38:48] So what do we see when these children arrive? And I'm here to tell you that the teachers I worked with, they worked valiantly to try to close the gap and help address the reading problems. But in spite of that, these children were challenged with academic and social problems at that level.

[02:39:11] A few examples of the challenges from this group included little or no access to the curriculum, inability to follow directions or complete the assignments, and participate fully in the classroom.

[02:39:27] So what did that reality lead to? It led to low confidence, little or no connection to their school, and very often discipline problems. I conclude my remarks with a quote from Thomas Jefferson.

[02:39:43] Education is the most legitimate object of government, as it is the only sure foundation of the preservation of our liberty and our happiness. And I agree with Mr. Jefferson on that.

[02:39:59] So thank you very much for your consideration. Thank you. So we are on speaker number 48, Lisa Dubois-Headley, to be followed by Melissa Jensen and Mary Payden. And then we are going back to speakers number 34, 5, 6, and 7.

[02:40:18] Welcome. Thank you very much for having me today. My name is Lisa Dubois-Headley, and I'm here also to speak on behalf of All Ages Read Together. I'm an individual in the community, but also a volunteer for the program, and I strongly support Fairfax County's reinstatement and continued funding of this program within Fairfax County.

[02:40:40] I've seen firsthand the powerful impact of early childhood education prior to kindergarten through my son's experience at Bailey's Elementary School in Fairfax County in Mason District. Programs like All Ages Read Together help young children build critical foundational skills before they ever enter a kindergarten classroom.

[02:40:58] From learning basic classroom behavior, The expectations and early skills interacting with classmates to gaining early exposure and structured lessons in reading. These experiences really do set children up for success in kindergarten and beyond.

[02:41:15] Ms. Gill said it best, when you get to third grade and you've got a reading lag, it really does, it will handicap kids. And it will absolutely handicap them moving forward. One of the most meaningful aspects of this program, I believe, is its commitment to providing children with free books.

[02:41:34] This is important because it helps families build home libraries that may not be possible. They wouldn't have access to this type of material. This fosters a love of reading at an early age and also reinforces learning outside of the classroom in a way that is accessible and sustainable.

[02:41:52] It's an important program. For many low-income families, all ages read together is not just beneficial, it's essential. This is their access to early childhood education. It helps ensure that children under kindergarten are ready to learn, confident, and equipped with the same foundational skills as their peers who may have access to private preschool or other early learning opportunities.

[02:42:19] By investing in this program, Fairfax County is helping to continue to foster a more equitable and level playing field for all students. I strongly urge the board to continue funding and reinstate into the

budget funding for All Ages Read Together so that every child, regardless of background and socioeconomic condition, has the opportunity to start school ready to succeed.

[02:42:45] Thank you for your time. Thank you. We're now on speaker number 49, Melissa Jensen, to be followed by speaker 50, Mary Payton. And after that, we are going to go to speakers 34 through 37. Welcome. Hi, good evening.

[02:43:02] My name is Melissa Jensen. I am the Senior Manager of Advocacy and Public Policy for the Capital Area Food Bank. The Capital Area Food Bank leads our region's efforts to provide equitable access to food to people struggling with hunger and food insecurity. Each year, we source and distribute the food for more than 60 million meals through a network of partners, including food pantries, faith-based organizations, community organizations, community centers, and more.

[02:43:27] In addition to traditional food distributions, we get food into the community through senior food boxes, community markets, and after-school programming, and summer meals. Fairfax County has long been a partner of CAFB, and at FY25, we distributed over 10 million meals in Fairfax County and are on track to exceed that this year.

[02:43:47] We have 117 partner agencies, and we've collaborated with government at different levels to improve the resources available. I would like to express thanks specifically to Chairman McKay and to Supervisor Lusk, who both have worked with the food bank in the last year, especially on expanding access during the emergency situations that we faced.

[02:44:07] Additionally, we'd like to highlight the partnership and work of Elisa Brooks, the food access program manager, and Brian Alexander, the food access program operation manager in the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. While Fairfax County is one of the wealthiest in the nation by median income, Food insecurity continues to be a persistent problem and has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.

[02:44:29] According to our 2025 Hunger Report, 26% of Fairfax County's residents have experienced food insecurity at one point in the year, and that is the second highest level in the past four years. This is driven by a number of factors, such as disruption to the federal workforce, inflation outpacing wage growth, and the continued high cost of food.

[02:44:50] We saw many families access food and assistance for the first time, while others had to make financial tradeoffs between food and other essential items, such as health care, child care, utilities, and housing. For all these reasons, we were thrilled to see that the Fairfax County advertised budget include a 5% increase in the funding for the consolidated community funding pool and an additional \$5.5 million to support emergency housing and emergency food assistance.

[02:45:18] The CCFP supports not only the Food Bank, but also our partners in the county who help get that food into people's hands. Increasing funding to these programs will help combat the rise in food insecurity and give organizations the flexibility they need to respond to unplanned disruptions, such as the reduction in force last year and these two record-length federal shutdowns that we've experienced.

[02:45:41] I know you all have a lot to consider, and I've heard many moving testimonies along with you this afternoon, But this investment truly reflects the county's commitment to all residents' quality of life and their ability to remain in their homes and in their communities. By prioritizing resources that

promote stability, accessibility, and well-being, the county is helping prevent displacement, reduce disparities, and foster a stronger, more inclusive community.

[02:46:07] We applaud County Executive Hill for including these monetary investments, and we urge you all to ensure that they remain within the final budget. Thank you. Thank you. Our next speaker is Mary Payden, and after Mary Payden, we are going to go to Marianella Funez, Odetta Del Sol, Franklin Molina, and Elder Antonio, which are speakers 34 through 37.

[02:46:30] Welcome. Hi, Jeff. I'm here with a group who's not all here yet. If you want to go ahead with the 30s, that'd be great. That's my problem with the other group, too. So why don't we go ahead and hear your testimony, and I'll circle back. Okay. So, good evening, Supervisors. I'm Mary Payton, representing the South County Task Force and leading a group, who will be here soon, of testifiers organized by Fairfax NAACP.

[02:46:55] You'll hear from people with different perspectives and lived experiences across a spectrum of income levels, from homeless to developers. So, we have three points on the budget. Please keep your promise of contributing the equivalent of two cents on the \$100 valuation of property tax in FY27.

[02:47:15] Two, keep people out of homelessness by adding funds for rent relief as needed and ensuring that tenants have legal representation in eviction court, as well as restoring funds for home repairs for the elderly. Three, give priority to the most vulnerable residents in expending funds from the county emergency contingency fund in case of federal cuts.

[02:47:42] The board has committed to fostering a diverse county where people at all points of the economic spectrum can live, work, and play, and it is noted that providing housing affordable to all workers is crucial to our economic success.

[02:47:58] Recent data show that the biggest pressure point on housing is the high demand and lack of supply for families at or below 60% AMI. This includes low-wage workers, young professionals, and seniors. The market will not supply housing at that level, nor can we count on trickle-down housing, which can take decades.

[02:48:19] This housing must be built with county subsidies as part of its capital stack. These subsidies are used to leverage other funding through tax credits and loans. Several years ago, Chairman McKay set a goal of building 10,000 new units by 2034.

[02:48:37] With a county contribution of about \$85,000 per unit, it was determined that the county could reach that goal by contributing an additional penny, or the equivalent of two pennies, on \$100 of property valuation to the Affordable Housing Development and Investment Fund.

[02:48:53] For several years, you promised two cents by FY27, But now it's FY27, and the contribution has been raised by only a quarter penny, and we are three-quarter pennies short. There's no additional funding in this FY27 budget for affordable housing, and the pipeline is starting to run thin.

[02:49:12] So we challenge you to keep the two-penny promise by adding that it would be \$26.25 million now or throughout the year in FY27. Second point, keeping people housed. experts agree that the best way to limit the number of homeless people is to keep people from falling into homelessness. Two ways to do that are to fund rent and utility relief for emergencies and offer legal representation in eviction court.

With the addition of \$5.5 million in FY27, emergency relief funds for rent, utilities, and food are now \$10.7 million,

[02:49:47] about double the amount pre-COVID. And currently, still many people are still turned away and referred to private charities who struggled to pass together donations. So we recommend that this fund be monitored and increased as necessary to meet the need. The eviction lab says that if tenants are not represented in eviction court, they're 100% likely to be evicted. If they are represented, they're only 50% likely to be evicted. The people most likely to be evicted are women, especially black women with children.

[02:50:21] In 2026, an additional attorney was funded, but it's still exceedingly difficult for a tenant to get an attorney in eviction court. We also asked for the restoration of the \$35,000 repair pilot program for low-to-moderate income households to help them maintain their home ownership.

[02:50:39] Putting the vulnerable residents first, finally there's a huge uncertainty around continued federal support for homeless programs. We hope the courts and Congress will prevent the threatened cuts to HUD funding in FY27.

[02:50:55] But we ask you to keep the most vulnerable residents at the top of your list for the emergency contingency funds, if they're needed. We think the Board is very wise in setting those funds aside. So, at some point, soon I hope some excellent speakers will follow me and present more information on these topics.

[02:51:15] So, thank you for your attention. very much, Mary. Appreciate that. Speakers number 34, Marianella Funez, are you here? Okay, please come on down close. We are on speakers 34, 35, 36, and 37. I'm going to call them all together.

[02:51:36] Marianella Funez, Odetta Del Sol, Franklin Molina, Elder Antonio. None of them are here. They will all go to the bottom of the list then today, because I've got to move on with folks and respect people's time who are here.

[02:51:58] So we will go to Speaker 51, John Dister. John Dister here. Speaker number 52, Mark Vianney. Speaker number 53, Liz Murphy, I know is here. Come on down, Liz.

[02:52:14] Speaker number 54, Leah Tenario. And speaker number 55, Arona Kessler. If I called your name, please come on down close to testify. Welcome, Liz. Good evening.

[02:52:34] I am Liz Murphy, a resident of Ramp Franconia, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak. Earlier this year, the Board of Supervisors Housing Initiative heard a staff report that there is a need for 13,800 rental units for residents earning 60% or less of the area median income.

[02:52:53] To help meet that need, I urge the Board of Supervisors to raise the contribution to the housing fund as promised, to the equivalent of two cents on each \$100 property valuation or about \$70 million per year.

[02:53:09] Accelerating the pace of providing homes affordable to these families will help the county live up to its promise of fostering a diverse population along all points of the economic spectrum. living, working, and building community together.

[02:53:25] Showcasing neighbors where housing diversity already thrives can help this effort. For example, for 30 years, my family has lived in a neighborhood of 400 single-family homes that includes 24

affordable townhomes for residents up to 60% AMI.

[02:53:43] The residents, like my family, live one block from a major bus line, a 10-minute walk from the Springfield Town Center, and less than a mile from the Franconia-Springfield Metro Transit Station. This model of enabling lower-income households to live among higher-income households breaks down stereotypes and can reduce the stigma associated with placing lower-income developments in isolation.

[02:54:08] Given the location of our home, I have had the pleasure of meeting most of the residents living in the townhomes as they pass our home on their way to the bus line or to our elementary and middle schools. Many have lived there as long as we have. My daughters attended school with the children from two families and have stayed in contact with them over the years.

[02:54:28] The townhomes include a retired middle school instructional aide, a medical coder who trained with me as a volunteer voter protection official, and a husband and wife team who work as construction flaggers. These townhome residents are essential service workers, entry-to-mid-level professionals, and support staff in the education, health, and food service industries.

[02:54:53] They make up the fabric of a healthy community and support the overall economy and health of our county. Let's make sure we honor their contributions by providing them the housing they need and deserve. Thank you very much for your time. Thank you very much, Liz.

[02:55:09] Speaker number 54, Leah Tenario, are you here? How about speaker number 55, Arona Kessler? Okay, and is this Arona Kessler?

[02:55:27] Okay, if you will follow Leah here. I'm going to let this happen this time. I'm really trying not to do this, and our list is getting really messed up, folks. So we're going to go exactly in the order. If the people aren't present at the time that they're called, they're going to be added to the end of the list because this is getting out of hand.

[02:55:46] Welcome, Mary. Yeah, thank you. Leah had to go to a meeting tonight for an employer. Leah is the Director of Hispanic Ministry and Outreach at the Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, near Mount Vernon, and she's speaking as an individual.

[02:56:04] This is her testimony. I'm introducing a set of speakers, who aren't here yet, who will discuss the need for more emphasis on keeping people housed in moments when they are vulnerable to losing their homes by missing a rent payment or by being evicted. Stopping evictions is less traumatic and less costly than providing homeless shelters and rapid rehousing.

[02:56:24] I'm requesting that you allocate more money for rental assistance in the new budget. I'm thankful for the increase in FY27, however, the need continues to grow at a very rapid rate. As a staff member in charge of Emergency Assistance Program at Good Shepherd, I take calls and visits from people in need of rent, utility, or food assistance.

[02:56:45] The greatest need is for rent. The cost of rent is sky high and keeps going up, and benefits like SNAP and Medicaid have been cut. People are also feeling the increase in food, gas, and other household needs because of inflation. I take about 45 phone calls in the first two weeks of the month, yet I can only help about 12 individuals or families.

[02:57:08] After two weeks, we are out of money, but the calls continue. During the rest of the month, I must turn away about 20 more families seeking help. Many of these callers are referred to me from

Coordinated Services Planning, the Central County hotline that people call when they're in need.

[02:57:24] These callers were told they could not be helped and given a list of resources, including my church, to call for assistance. I think the county should monitor the number of people who are actually helped through CSP versus how many are referred elsewhere to measure the need.

[02:57:40] Good Shepherd has limited funds to distribute each month with a maximum of about \$500 for case. Most of the time, it's not enough to solve the emergency. I often contact other churches or agencies, hoping to patch together enough funds to cover the amount needed.

[02:57:57] I've seen the need increase in 2026, and I fear it is going to continue to rise. We need to prepare for this by increasing rental assistance funds. Otherwise, we're going to have a bigger problem with more unhoused individuals and families. Thank you. Thank you, Mary.

[02:58:14] Speaking for Leah, Arona Kessler. Following Arona will be Neera Dada, Julie Windsor, and Grace Intifil. If I called your name, please come down close and be ready to testify. Welcome. Good evening. My name is Arona Kessler. I live in the Mount Vernon District, and thank you for this opportunity to address you regarding the budget.

[02:58:37] I'm here tonight to ask you to please raise the contribution of property tax support for affordable housing to two cents on each \$100 property valuation. to build 10,000 new affordable housing units for residents like me, earning up to 60% AMI by 2034.

[02:58:55] This amount has been promised but not delivered for several years. In addition, please look for ways to speed up permitting affordable housing. Please increase funding for Family Services, Neighborhood and Community Services, and the Community Services Board. These programs assist our most vulnerable residents in Fairfax County.

[02:59:13] They help keep vulnerable people housed rather than falling into homelessness. Rental assistance is one way the county can keep folks housed who would otherwise be evicted. Assisting folks facing eviction with an attorney is another way the county can prevent evictions and prevent a rise in homelessness.

[02:59:31] March 2026 saw the most eviction filings in Fairfax County since the county started tracking filings several years ago. Considering we have no rent control or stabilization in Virginia, the need appears to only be going up for rental assistance and for counsel and eviction hearings.

[02:59:46] I've seen firsthand the positive impact legal aid and private attorneys have in eviction prevention. The access to counsel in evictions pilot is a promising program. Unfortunately, because of how the program is funded, counsel is typically only provided to folks who report a COVID impact.

[03:00:04] I urge you to find additional funding for this program so folks without COVID or a COVID impact can be served. Creating a pilot program for access to counsel is part of Fairfax County's regional fair housing plan that was published in November 2023. The plan also calls for Fairfax County to expand locally funded housing vouchers and to expand and increase support for fair housing outreach, education, and training, testing, and enforcement.

[03:00:31] Finally, please support permanent supportive housing and increase the amount of people served in PSH. Homeless people already spend five to six months in emergency shelters waiting for

permanent housing. Current changes at the federal level could see over 700 people currently in PSH and Fairfax County lose their housing.

[03:00:49] PSH has proven to move people from homelessness to stability. Please secure adequate county funding to continue our PSH program year-round and speed up the development of 200-plus PSH units in the pipeline. Thank you. Thank you. We are on speaker number 56, Nira Data, to be followed by Julie Windsor, Grace Intisifel, and Dr. Elizabeth Frazier.

[03:01:13] If you're here, please be ready to testify. Welcome, Nira. Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman McKay, supervisor Alcorn and members of the board. My name is Neera Dada. I'm a long-time affordable housing and special education advocate here in Fairfax County. I'm also someone who spends a lot of time walking through our public buildings, our libraries, our school front offices, government center, and the courthouse, looking for what information is actually available to the folks who need it. In special education advocacy, we understand that the process people follows

[03:01:51] really matters. Families cannot advocate effectively if they don't understand the process or what step comes next. And that's why we rely on plain language explanations, step-by-step guidance, and simple visual tools like flowcharts. Education is vitally important, and so is housing and food and water. Over the past year, I spent a lot of time thinking about how we share information with people who are in crisis. I keep coming back to this question, why do we keep spending so much money and creating polished websites and pamphlets that ultimately tell

[03:02:25] someone to call a number. And then they're supposed to, they're expected to hope to reach an attorney to try and understand a complicated legal process. And then they eventually have to pay a bill that most simply cannot afford. For those facing eviction, that sequence does not protect their rights. It creates a barrier at the exact moment that they need help. One day I walked around the courthouse, and I picked up every pamphlet and piece of paper and flyer available to the public.

[03:02:56] I took them home, read them carefully, and quite frankly, I was disappointed. Out of an entire wall of paper, resources, services, phone numbers, and referrals, only one pamphlet clearly explained the eviction process itself. Only one showed the path from A to B to C to D. For someone who's facing eviction, that missing information, it matters. In this digital age, we assume that we can just say it's online. And that's an appropriate answer to an extremely vulnerable person looking for help.

[03:03:30] Folks, pamphlet, paper pamphlets matter. Clear directions matter. What would make a real difference is plain language, visual step-by-step guidance that explains how eviction actually works in Fairfax County. I respectfully ask the board to take a close look at what eviction information is truly accessible in our public spaces.

[03:03:51] Let's make sure people understand the process before it's too late and another family finds themselves unhoused. Now, Julie Windsor is not available. She has injured her foot. She is also an unhoused person. With your permission, I'd like to speak on her behalf.

[03:04:07] Please. Okay. Hello and good afternoon, supervisors. My name is Julie Windsor, and I'm homeless. And it still shocks me a little bit to say that. Homeless. I've gained firsthand knowledge of the circumstances that landed many of us into homelessness, And each story is as unique as we are, and I'd like to share a few details about my journey.

[03:04:28] I'm a long-term resident of Nova, and I've had been a homeowner since the age of 25. I attended college, got married, had two sons, who are now grown men. In recent years, I encountered a variety of obstacles that were life-altering. I lost my spouse to an unexpected death and lost his income, our home and its equity.

[03:04:46] I experienced declining health to the point I had 10 vascular surgeries in two years, and that resulted in my inability to work. In 2023, one of my sons went missing for a mental health concern, and I spent the last three years and all of my last dollars attempting to get him help here in Northern Virginia.

[03:05:04] In many ways, he's better now, but I am not. We ended up in Fairfax in early 2024 and lived in an extended stay hotel. It was expensive, but it was safe. I couldn't qualify for a rental because my assets had dwindled and my income was sporadic due to my health struggles.

[03:05:21] I was able to keep the hotel roof over our heads until everything collapsed with a major car accident. We are grateful to have participated in Fairfax County's hypothermia program. We were safe and warm during an incredibly cold winter. I ask that you fully fund the requests for assistance.

[03:05:38] Publicize the county's homelessness stats. A penny increase in real estate tax per \$100 value is about \$77 annually on a \$775k home. Most homeowners wouldn't disagree with that. Assist the people whose situations can be remedied quickly.

[03:05:56] Rapid rehousing needs to be more rapid. Expect big businesses to contribute. Establish standards that require it. An FAQ sheet would be really helpful. Help us to navigate this journey. I urge all of the organizations in this county and the board itself to take on a portion of the mission.

[03:06:16] Please assist the people whose situations can be remedied quickly. Thank you for listening to my experience. Thank you. We are on speaker number 58, Grace Insifel. Are you here? She's on the phone. Okay, has she connected?

[03:06:32] Okay, Grace, can you hear me okay? I can hear you okay. Can you all hear me? We can. Welcome. The floor is yours. Okay, all right. Well, good evening to everyone there. Basically, Lord, this is so hard to hear. I'm currently, oh, Jesus, please don't help me get emotional.

[03:06:52] I'm currently unhoused, and I am a person who did go to college. I thought I have done all the right things. Went to college, had a professional career in IT. What landed me here was the housing pricing issue.

[03:07:12] It was just too much for me. My lease ended, and I was on the street. I don't have family like that to be able to help me in these times with me. The reason is because I am like the strong one on both sides of the family.

[03:07:30] I am the one who made it out, quote unquote. So it's like, how do you help the person who actually made it out? How do you help the person who the whole family looks to to actually help? I'm that person and now I need help. I'm currently going through the situation, you know, coming up with a success plan strategy to try to get myself up out of this.

[03:07:51] But it's happened since October 2005, and I do have to say that the hyperthermia was absolutely life-saving. That is something, that's a program that needs to be extended longer with actual transportation help and continued hygiene and food help.

[03:08:12] Because when you're going through this process that can literally happen to anybody, I mean, I still can't believe that I'm in this circumstance. But I'm in it, and I'm working actively to get myself out of it. When you're going through a circumstance like this, the weight of the mental and emotional and spiritual breakdown that it has on you is absolutely phenomenal.

[03:08:38] And as a woman, if I didn't have, like, fighting skills, I don't know how I would have made it. Because the safety issues of potentially getting raped, the safety issues of potentially, you know, maybe getting murdered or something like that, and I'm so serious when I say that, is tremendous.

[03:08:58] Having to figure out every single day what your meals are going to be, where you're going to wash yourself, where you're going to get your clothes. And then even when you're sleeping, trying to make sure that there aren't any men or even women trying to harm you in your way. You're doing all those things at the same time, navigating your mind to the next steps.

[03:09:16] Every single day you try to maintain what you like yourself, and then you're also trying to maintain the next step of the house, and then trying to maintain the next step of the financial plan. The churches have been a tremendous help in regards to the everyday process.

[03:09:33] With this happening, I just, and then being on the side, I'm just seeing so many women and just so many people who, I don't, homelessness doesn't have a look, but you kind of think it does. And to meet so many different people who are educated and have landed themselves in this position because of the housing issue of them not being able to afford it at that time and trying to figure out a plan to work that out is something else.

[03:09:57] as well as trying to figure out the information and the resources and the information to be able to help you on a daily basis has been a struggle. It should be a little bit more easier in regards to like a 1-800 number to where you can find the day centers and the places where you can eat every day and all those things in regards to that.

[03:10:20] Also, with what I've experienced with that, it would be, I feel like it would be instrumental to have counties involved in it a little bit more. I just don't feel like this burden should be so heavy on the churches as much because they've been able to help, but it's like with the increase of this problem, it seems like there should be more help and resources in regards to this problem.

[03:10:52] Thank you. Thank you, Grace. Thank you. Thank you very much, Grace, for your testimony. I appreciate it. We are on speaker number 59, Dr. Elizabeth Frazier. Is she here? Dr. Elizabeth Fraser, is that you?

[03:11:09] Okay, please be very careful coming down the stairs. We are then going to go to speaker number 60, Jerry Pogey, speaker 61, Finn Yates, and speaker 62, Pamela Dister.

[03:11:25] If I called your name, come down close to testify. And for those who are monitoring remotely, we are here on speaker number 59. If you did not get here at the time I called your slot, we will be hearing from those people at the end.

[03:11:45] Welcome. Good evening. My name is Therese Chaplin. I'm a resident of Fairfax County and a member of the NAACP Housing Committee. I'm here tonight to speak the words of Dr. Elizabeth Fraser, who's a Fairfax County resident. And this is from Dr. Elizabeth Fraser.

[03:12:03] I saw it coming, but still there wasn't much warning. I had two jobs, but due to a sequence of unavoidable events, including neurological issues, I was suddenly out of work. My medical situation made it difficult to find work I could perform, and my savings only went so far.

[03:12:22] Before long, I was unhoused. My new home was my car. I was in that car for 531 days. An automobile is not meant to house someone, especially when it doesn't work the majority of the time most of those 531 days.

[03:12:39] Some of the daily problems, the most obvious would be no bathrooms, then sleeping in a seat, which led to back problems and edema, minimal security, and no heat. When it was cold, I tried to stay warm in layers of three. Two layers of thermals, plus a fleece or sweats, a hat, hood, and scarf, two socks and foot warmers, a sleeping bag, and two blankets.

[03:13:03] Early on in this journey, I found the Lamb Center, the variety of services they provide, and the number of people that benefit from their assistance is astonishing. On a daily basis, I was able to get two meals and a shower. Other services I could access included laundry, nursing care, dental care, and case management.

[03:13:23] Their support made an impossible situation survivable. But it went beyond that. The case managers, in conjunction with facets, worked to find housing for hundreds of people. For me, my move to affordable housing became a reality after 531 days of living in my car.

[03:13:40] Those work entirely at the Lamb Center and Facets, open the doors to an affordable, inhabitable space, my apartment. While I was unhoused, one of the few positive things I held on to was knowing that housing was a possibility. I have now been housed for approximately 16 months.

[03:13:58] Some of the best elements of being housed, having a locked door that allows for security and a degree of peace. Sleeping in a bed, which means sleeping with significantly less pain. A private bathroom and a shower to maintain the level of hygiene that I desire.

[03:14:15] Being able to cook, take care of myself. It's not just about housing, it's about dignity, self-confidence, and looking ahead. The public doesn't recognize the benefits that often come with housing, that it's not just housing, it's about basic needs and so much more.

[03:14:32] It's a stepping stone that helps people become contributing members of society. The advocates that are here tonight know that they are fighting for the unhoused and they need you to fight with them fight not just for the unhoused to have a roof and four walls but to elevate the greater well-being of the future residents and the newly housed thank you for listening thank you very much uh we are on speaker number 60 jerry poge not seeing him about speaker number 61 finn yates uh is by telephone um do we have finn yates connected can you hear us okay Yeah, can you hear me?

[03:15:13] Yes, we can. Welcome. The floor is yours. All right. Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Finn Yates. Thank you for allowing me to speak today. This year is my second year of high school at South Lakes, and South Lakes is a pretty diverse school in nearly all aspects.

[03:15:29] As a result, I have both rich and poor friends. My family is very well off. My parents own a successful business, so I've never had to worry about electricity being out or being no food in the pantry. However, I know many of my peers and friends don't have these same privileges.

[03:15:47] Last year when I testified, I told the story of one of my friends from school. I still remember the day when I called him. I was studying math, and we were discussing how to solve question number 22, and I heard a loud car drive by, and it was louder than normal.

[03:16:04] I asked my friend, did you hear that? He responded, the car? Yeah, why was it so loud? He explained, there was a hole in his window. I didn't know what to say to that. Later, he sent me a picture of a shattered window with a thin piece of cardboard covering the hole.

[03:16:21] He told me the person living there before his family had broken it, but didn't replace the window when he left. His parents were saving up money to fix it, but most of the paycheck went to paying for the basics. Food, water, gas. That explained why he wasn't getting the best grades at school.

[03:16:38] I couldn't see how I'd be able to study with all kinds of noise coming through a hole in the window. When I spoke to many of my other friends, I heard similar stories. electricity turned off, no food at home, broken appliances. These are just some of them. The sad part is that all these problems directly lead to worse academic performance. My laptop's friend's laptop died because he couldn't plug it in at home, so he couldn't get any of his homework done.

[03:17:05] Everyone knows that you perform worse in school when you don't eat. However, there is a hope. There is a solution to these problems. The solution is more affordable housing. With more affordable housing, families can save money in order to eventually get their own homes. Kids won't have to worry about lights being out. My friends won't have a broken window in his home. Earlier year this, I called the same friend again to work on their English assignment. I knew that over the summer, his window had finally gotten fixed, so it came as a surprise when I heard cars still driving by. The new reason was that part of his roof collapsed. These

[03:17:42] problems aren't going away. Only the decisions we make today will be able to solve them. That's why today I asked you to fund for more affordable housing, not only for my friends are those that I know, but because I know everyone living at Fairfax County. Thank you. Thank you, Finn. Speaker number 62 is Pamela Dister. Is she here? Okay. If you could come on down to be followed by Alan Millman and speaker number 64, Natty Peralta-Wentworth.

[03:18:09] If I called your name, please come down here close. Be ready to testify. Welcome. My name is Pam Dister, and I'm speaking today as an individual, but also as a member of the Fairfax NAACP and St. John Neumann Catholic Church. I'm here to talk about how the lack of affordable and permanent supportive housing has impacted some of our most vulnerable residents, those who participate in our hypothermia prevention shelter program. In 2005, Fairfax County established its hypothermia prevention program to keep people experiencing homelessness in our air from freezing during the winter months. My parish has supported this program

[03:18:46] since 2008 by hosting guests for a week each winter in partnership with the nonprofit Facets. I've coordinated our volunteers since the program began and I never expected that in 2026 I would tell you that we are hosting more guests than ever. Each day our guests arrive at five o'clock in the afternoon. We provide snacks, dinner, fellowship, entertainment, and a variety of services such as foot care and haircuts. We offer them a warm place to sleep, breakfast in the morning and a bag lunch. They leave our facility by 7 in the morning, and they stay with a different faith community every single week. Each person has his own unique and heartbreaking story. One

[03:19:24] gentleman that I met this year had lost his parents and siblings in the past few years and is now dealing with his own cancer. Losing his support system traumatized him, and he struggles to maintain a positive attitude. Another guest gave up her apartment because she just couldn't confront the landlord about problems with her unit. She hasn't been able to find an affordable place, so she and her young adult daughter spent time this winter in their storage unit to keep warm. These people need stable living situations because right now their lives lack dignity. Our program experienced difficulties during this winter's frigid weather. Sometimes

[03:20:01] the number of guests exceeded the capacity of the churches, and people had to be shuffled around. There were gaps between our program hours and those of the day shelters, such as the Lamb Center. We worked to close those gaps, but there were times when guests had no option but to be outside in the elements. This program exists because there's not enough affordable or permanent supportive housing in the county. I urge you to keep your promise and fully fund the equivalent of two cents on each \$100 of property valuation for housing. I also urge you to keep people out of homelessness by providing rent relief and legal aid assistance in eviction court. Finally,

[03:20:41] Please think about our hypothermia guests, who are the most vulnerable in this county, if you need to dip into your emergency reserve fund this year. I'm grateful for the opportunity to help provide dignity to our guests in the hypothermia prevention program, but I look forward to the day when this program will no longer be needed.

[03:20:59] Thank you, Pam. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 63 is Alan Millman, to be followed by Natty Peralta-Wentworth and Tammy Wongdong. Welcome. Good evening Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

[03:21:17] Hello, my name is Alan Millman and I live in the Vienna portion of Fairfax County. I am here today to speak about the Be Well program and how it's changed my life forever. When I was first introduced to the Be Well program a few years ago, I weighed 405 pounds and was fighting a severe depression and bad eating habits.

[03:21:39] I had gained over 230 pounds since high school and was very scared for my life. I felt ashamed of my body and wasn't too thrilled to lose weight. However, I was introduced to a wonderful coach named Brittany Goetsch, who was at the time a coach for the Be Well program.

[03:22:00] She introduced me to different eating habits and healthier eating habits. I listened to her instructions and she gave me great advice. I started being confident in my body and eating habits. A few months after I had started the B-Well program, I had switched to a new B-Well program coach, whose name was Sydney Cook.

[03:22:21] I had transitioned to her very good and we clicked right away. We had common areas in our lives and she made me feel more excited to lose weight. She also gave me to come out of my shell to explain to me what was really going on.

[03:22:40] She also gave me advice on how to lose weight. I had no inspiration to do any exercise before the Be Well program was introduced to me. After I was introduced, I felt the courage to start an exercise regimen.

[03:22:56] I also started eating healthier in my life. I am now under 380, all thanks to my Be Well program coach's advice. I believe if I kept eating bad and as a diabetic, I would have gotten worse diabetes and even

possibly died.

[03:23:13] I thank the Be Well program basically for saving my life and giving me the courage to eat better and healthier. If the Be Well program were cut from the budget, I wouldn't know who to go to for advice and possibly wouldn't want to do an exercise regimen anymore.

[03:23:31] So I plead to the board not to cut the Be Well program and have a heart to think about how many lives the Be Well program has changed and has changed mine. Thank you. Our next speaker is speaker number 64.

[03:23:50] I want to be respectful of everyone's time. If we could try to applaud less, it takes a lot of time here, and I want to make sure everybody can get out of here at a reasonable time. So we are on speaker number 64, Natty Peralta-Wentworth, to be followed by Tammy Wong-Dong.

[03:24:07] Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of Fairfax County Board. My name is Natty Peralta-Wentworth. I'm a housing attorney for the Legal Aid Justice Center. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Rooted in our experience representing low-income immigrant families in Fairfax County, we urge you to do three things.

[03:24:25] Increase the Affordable Housing Fund dedication to two pennies, dedicate more funding to deeply affordable housing, and designate \$15 million for manufactured home park acquisition. Over this last year, federal law enforcement has targeted Fairfax County's immigrant communities for arrests, deportation, and family separation, accelerating at rates higher than almost anywhere in the United States.

[03:24:49] We've also seen the federal government slash public benefits programs in ways that will take food and health insurance away from millions of low-income people. We already know that people will sacrifice other essential needs, like food and health care, to pay the rent. These cuts mean that communities of color in Fairfax County have even less income to stretch.

[03:25:09] What this looks like on my end as an eviction defense attorney is that every day I talk to someone who is scraping together an exorbitant rent for apartments plagued with mice, cockroaches, heat malfunctions, and mold. And now I'm also hearing more and more from parents who are panicking after their spouse was detained or deported, trying to cope with that trauma and still somehow make the rent.

[03:25:32] Stable and secure housing is essential to every Fairfax resident's well-being, no matter their race, where they're from, or how long they've lived here. These intensifying attacks on our immigrant neighbors are compounded on decades of exclusion and exploitation in the housing market.

[03:25:48] We need you to act urgently to rectify the lack of housing opportunities and help our neighbors weather this moment. First, we ask that the county board increase the real estate tax dedication to two cents for affordable housing. The Board's goal is to increase the funding to two pennies by fiscal year 2027, but didn't do so in this budget.

[03:26:08] The Board consistently reaffirms their goal to create a minimum of 10,000 new affordable housing rates by 2034, and at the same time recognizes that without increasing the funding to two pennies on the real estate tax rate, that goal is impossible to meet. We encourage the Board to act on this clear need and increase the baseline dedication.

[03:26:27] Fairfax County has a strong pipeline of projects and good partnerships with affordable housing developers, but reliable county funding is critical to making progress on these goals. Second, we ask that the Board dedicate more affordable housing funding to deeply affordable housing for people earning 40% area median income or below.

[03:26:46] The county's housing needs assessment was clear. There is a critical shortage of housing for lower-income residents, and the market is not and will not provide housing at this price point. A staggering 87%, almost all of renters earning less than \$75,000 per year are housing costs burdened, paying more than 30% of their income in rent.

[03:27:07] This is the income range with the highest need and where the county should dedicate the most resources to relieving the rent burden. When families are not rent burdened, they are less likely to be evicted. They are more likely to stay in their neighborhoods. Their health improves. Children have better educational outcomes and their communities are more prosperous.

[03:27:26] Third, we ask that the county contribute \$15 million for manufactured home park preservation. For years, LAJC has supported the Manufactured Home Park Resident Council and Tenants and Workers United, who have tirelessly advocated for park preservation.

[03:27:42] One barrier was a weak state law, but that changed this week. On Monday, Governor Spanberger signed into law HB 375, which will give residents and localities a right of first refusal to purchase their park if it is offered for sale. We ask this board to set aside funds to supplement residents with funding support to support their purchase offers.

[03:28:03] If the county does not act this year, even more parks will likely be in the hands of out-of-state private equity companies by next year, and the opportunities to preserve our communities will be even fewer. This action will put teeth behind the county's commitments to manufactured housing, generate fiscally responsible investments in affordable housing, And most importantly, answer the call of the at least 1,700 Fairfax County families to make their home ownership meaningful, permanent, and a way to thrive.

[03:28:33] All of Fairfax's residents deserve to benefit from equitable housing opportunities in the county. Please act to secure a safe and stable future for Fairfax's low-income immigrant renters. Thank you. Thank you very much. We are going to take the next speakers.

[03:28:48] I'm going to call them together because I think they're grouped together. Speaker number 65, Tammy Wandong, to be followed by Yasmeen Shafik, Maria Jose Padmore, Kelly McHugh, and Lenorel Thomas.

[03:29:05] Welcome, Tammy. Good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors and County Executive Mr. Hill. My name is Tammy Wandong, and I am the president of the Fairfax Chapter of SEIU Virginia 512.

[03:29:23] I have been working with Fairfax County for 36 years in the Department of Family Services. I am here today to express our deep gratitude to the board and the county executive for fully funding our first collective bargaining agreement in this proposed budget.

[03:29:42] For the thousands of workers our union represents, the people who keep our parks beautiful, our streets safe, and our libraries thriving, This contract is more than just a document. It is a promise of

stability and respect.

[03:30:03] By locking in raises of 9 to 16 percent over the next three years and securing added leave and telework protections, you are investing in the frontline staff who make this county world class. As I reflect on my nearly 37 years with Fairfax, I am reminded of the many years that the general county workers' pay raises were held, reduced, or restructured as bonuses or some

[03:30:39] other gimmick to balance the county's budget. It impacted our careers and families, but our commitment to quality public services never faltered. When this agreement is implemented on July 1st, it marks a new era for Fairfax County. New employees may never have to experience the uncertainties we experienced. For the first time in decades, we won't be wondering

[03:31:15] If our benefits are secure or if our voices will be heard during the budget cycle, we will have a seat at the table and a contract that guarantees our protections.

[03:31:31] That certainty doesn't just help us. It helps the residents that we serve by ensuring a stable, dedicated, and professional workforce. We also want to thank the board for listening to families and educators and choose not to privatize the Fairfax County Employees Child Care Center.

[03:31:58] Keeping the ECCC public protects our co-workers, jobs, and ensures high-quality care for county parents. While we remain concerned about the proposed elimination of 107 married positions, we are ready to work with you.

[03:32:21] Because we have a union and a contract, we have the framework to ensure that any affected employees are treated with fairness and dignity they deserve. Thank you for your leadership and for demonstrating that when we work together through collective bargaining, we can find solutions that support our employees, our families, and the entire Fairfax community.

[03:32:49] We look forward to a strong partnership as we move forward toward July 1st. Thank you. Thank you, Tammy. Speaker number 66, Yasmeen Shafiq. Welcome. Supervisors, County Executive, County Leadership.

[03:33:10] I think they're all around. My name is Yasmin, and I'm on the chapter board of our union. And I was, along with union members from several different departments, at the bargaining table with the county leadership this fiscal year to negotiate the first ever contract for Fairfax County Government Employee, for Fairfax County Government General Government Employees.

[03:33:35] And yes, I am proud. I'm proud that this contract gives raises to the whole bargaining unit, even those who don't believe in the power of collective bargaining. I don't mind detractors. I take notes. What we've done together through conflict, through negotiation, and ultimately to resolution is made Fairfax County a better place to work.

[03:34:01] And actually, I'd love to help make Fairfax County one of the best places to work. We're not quite there yet. We've got 3.7 stars out of five on the website Glassdoor last time I checked today. So we have room to grow. I'm confident. I'm confident that we get there by continuing to work together and, dare I say it, help each other.

[03:34:28] Our collective mission, both leadership and employees, is to serve the residents of Fairfax County. And we do that best when we can trust each other and resolve issues as they come up together. Our contract is a real-world example of what we can achieve with real collaboration.

[03:34:48] 3.7 stars isn't too far off from 5, though, so I'm asking you to keep working with us to achieve that shared goal. Let's also let Fairfax County shine and lead by example. Obviously, there are national forces at play, but we shouldn't be discouraged by that which is outside of our control.

[03:35:12] There is a Muslim saying that if the final hour comes to you while you have in your hand a seedling, then you should plant it. Inshallah, we have many hours left to go and much to accomplish together before we're done.

[03:35:29] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 67 is Maria Jose Padmore, to be followed by Kelly McHugh and Lenoral Thomas. Welcome. Greetings, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Maria Jose Padmore.

[03:35:48] I am a site leader at North County, an executive board member of Fairfax Chapter OSCIU, Virginia 512. I have worked for Fairfax County Health Department for over 21 years. First, I'd like to honestly thank this board for fully funding our first collective bargaining agreement in the proposed budget.

[03:36:13] That decision sends a clear message that you value county workers and are committed to partnership with us to deliver high-quality public service.

[03:36:31] I also would like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts to improve conditions at the North County Human Service Building in Cameron Glen, where several county agencies operate or members have raised serious concerns about safety, crime, and health hazards at that site.

[03:37:02] We appreciate the board's support and continued collaboration, and we look forward to seeing these improvements completed and permanently resolved, so every employee and resident feels safe and respected when they enter a building.

[03:37:27] Finally, I want to address the proposed elimination of the speech and hearing program. This program is vital, lifeline to families, especially children, who depend on these services.

[03:37:47] Eliminating this program will create a serious gap in care for vulnerable residents who cannot afford longer waits or fewer options. We urge you to preserve this program for the clients who rely on it.

[03:38:07] We ask that you protect the seven county employees who currently run it and they are dedicated public servants who deserve to remain with the county without cuts to their salary or their benefits.

[03:38:24] We stand ready to work with you, like always, to find a fair and equitable solution that protects both public service and employees who provide them. Thank you for your time and your commitment and to a fair, collaborative budget process.

[03:38:48] Si se puede. Thank you. Thank you. Figure number 68 is Kelly McHugh. Welcome. Thank you. Good evening, Chairman McKay and members of the board. My name is Kelly McHugh. I'm a Fairfax County employee, a member of SCIU Virginia 512, and a proud mom of two.

[03:39:06] This time last year, I was sitting right over there in my blue shirt fighting to save the employee's child care center. I know it's a long few days for you all, so thank you for the energy that you put into these hearings. When the proposal to privatize the ECCC first came out, those of us who rely on the center didn't know where to begin.

[03:39:25] We had no experience with community organizing or navigating the budget process. But because we have a union, we didn't have to start from scratch. I reached out to our union leaders, and they helped to provide the framework that we needed. As union members, we found the tools to organize our fellow parents and the platform to collaborate directly with county leadership.

[03:39:45] It wasn't just about support. It was about collective action. We met with our leaders, strategized as a team, and most importantly, we showed up for each other when it counted. I'm so proud of how we championed this cause from the inside out. I also want to sincerely thank this board for your collaboration.

[03:40:04] Many of you took the time to meet with us, to tour the center, and spent real energy looking for ways to keep this incredible benefit in public hands. And that is what true partnership looks like. By fully funding our first collective bargaining agreement in this budget, you are continuing that commitment to your employees.

[03:40:23] You are proving that when workers have a seat at the table, we can find sustainable solutions that protect county services and support our families. On behalf of my fellow SEIU members, thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to our continued work together to keep Fairfax County the best place to live and to work.

[03:40:41] Thank you so much. Thank you. Speaker number 69 is Lenorel Thomas. Welcome. Thank you so much, Chairman McKay. Good evening, members of the board, Chairman McKay, members of the board, and County Executive Heal.

[03:40:57] I think you all have noticed the theme. We are here this evening. We decided not to sit this one out, even though we have a fully funded contract proposed in the budget. We wanted to show up to say thank you because we recognize that that did not just happen. We just did not get here. And so I stand before you today as the president of SEIU Virginia 512, representing 16,000 public sector workers across the Commonwealth, united in one union and proud of the work that they do and we do every single day. This budget is a true milestone

[03:41:33] for Fairfax County Union members. For more than two decades, our members, sanitation workers, educators, park staff, nurses, engineers, my husband who's a county employee would give me if I did not say court employees, have organized, sacrificed, and stayed committed to the belief that they deserve a voice in their workplace.

[03:41:58] They did not just ask for change, they built it. And today, by fully funding this first collective bargaining agreement, you are honoring that persistence. You are recognizing that the people who do the work every day should have a real say in how that work happens.

[03:42:16] At its core, collective bargaining is about input. It's about workers having a seat at the table, not just to raise concerns, but to help shape solutions. The people closest to the work understand what it takes to deliver quality services.

[03:42:33] They know what is working, what is not, and what our communities truly need. When their voices are respected and built into decision-making, the outcome is not just better for workers, it's better for every resident in the county. We also have to be honest about the moment we're in.

[03:42:52] Across this country, working families are under pressure. Costs are rising, stability feels uncertain, and too many people are being asked to do more with less. In moments like this, it can be easy to divide, to retreat, or to lower expectations.

[03:43:10] But what we have here in Fairfax County is something different. We have an opportunity to come together around shared goals. We have an opportunity to say clearly that working families deserve more than just getting by. They deserve the chance to thrive. And thriving does not happen by accident. It happens through strong union contracts that set clear standards and expectations.

[03:43:36] It happens through labor management relationships that are grounded in respect, accountability, and partnership. It happens when we commit together to solving problems instead of avoiding them. That is what this agreement represents. It is not just a contract. It is foundation for how we move for it together. Each year, we have stood before you with an ask. Some years, many ask. And this year feels different. This year, we stand before you asking a different question. What can we do together? What can we do as we continue to lobby and advocate at the state and federal level?

[03:44:15] Because SEIU just doesn't show up in this room. We want to make sure we ensure that Fairfax County has what it needs to fully fund union contracts and to continue delivering the quality services our community depends on year after year. Because this is not just about one budget cycle. This is about long-term sustainability, shared responsibility, and making sure that the progress we are building today continues for years to come. As we move forward with implementation on July 1st, we are ready for that partnership. Let us know. Let us know how we can advocate,

[03:44:54] how we can lobby. What does Fairfax County need to help balance a budget every year, to keep funding contracts, which ultimately helps deliver quality services and quality jobs? We've seen it with ECCC. When we work together, we can be solution driven. That same spirit of Coordination and shared responsibility is what we bring to the challenges ahead.

[03:45:19] Thank you again. We're excited to continue working together. Thank you, Lenorel. Appreciate you. And thank you all for being here. And David Broder, all this started on your watch and your leadership. And here we are with Lenorel. Congratulations.

[03:45:36] Our next speaker is speaker number 70, Ed Saperstein. Is Ed here? Ed Saperstein. Dorothy Edwards. is dorothy edwards here dorothy edwards speaker number 71 about speaker ah you are here you are here excellent come on down uh to be followed by if i call your name please come down close casey scott and jill norcross welcome good afternoon chair members of the board i guess good evening now um i know we've been here a while i've been here since the beginning with

[03:46:14] you i appreciate you guys being here and giving us a chance to speak out on some of our needs I'm Dorothy Edwards. I am president of the Huntington Community Association, and I am here on behalf of a diverse, resilient, and scrappy community that is paying very close attention to the decision you are preparing to make about our beloved Huntington Community Center.

[03:46:36] Let me get right to it. Closing the Huntington Community Center is not just a budget choice. It is a statement about what communities you choose to invest in and which ones you are willing to overlook and leave behind.

[03:46:54] Huntington has been asking often for basic investments, safer conditions on Huntington Avenue, smarter development and building use that allows local businesses to move into our

neighborhood, and infrastructure that matches the growth you're approving in the areas surrounding us in our district. And too often, unfortunately, we are met with delays and deferrals or no response at all.

[03:47:21] And now instead of that investment, we're facing a really huge loss to our community. I know I sound frustrated. I know I do. And honestly, that's because I am. And I hope you can really hear where I'm coming from as the person who has been chosen to represent her community, a community that has, quite frankly, felt overlooked for some time.

[03:47:46] But the reality is the people of Huntington are doing the work ourselves. We maintain our neighborhood. We organize cleanups and community workdays. We dig our neighbors out of the snow and deliver meals to our neighbors experiencing hardship. We support our small businesses. We attend the programming at our community center.

[03:48:04] And that matters to you. We know because people choose to buy homes in Huntington, they are investing in Fairfax County. They are strengthening your tax base. They are contributing to local economic growth. People choose to live in Fairfax County because of communities like Huntington.

[03:48:21] So the question really is simple. We, the people of Huntington, are investing in our own communities. Is the county willing to do the same with us? The Huntington Community Center is not optional for us. It is essential infrastructure that is vital for our families, our youth, our seniors, and most vulnerable neighbors who I know personally.

[03:48:42] Abandoning it will only deepen the inequities our community already faces. Personally, I have a young son that I am proud to be raising in Huntington, and I often bring him to the children's programming at the center. The socialization, education, and the foundation it's giving him instilling the importance of community connection and caring for his neighbors are invaluable lessons that he is learning by growing up a part of the Huntington Community Center.

[03:49:09] Our neighbors, especially those who live alone, and our seniors rely on the community programming, classes, and events at the Center for Connection and Belonging, something we know is not a luxury but a proven necessity for health, well-being, and longevity.

[03:49:25] Our families rely on the community center for affordable after-school care, summer camps, and youth programming, especially when the surrounding school-based options are expensive and have long wait lists. This is literally the only accessible option for so many of us with kids.

[03:49:43] I've met so many other parents, like me, my neighbors, who rely on these programs to help keep their families afloat and help manage the juggling required to be working parents at a time of such intense uncertainty. They won't have another option for their kids if you take this away. It is that simple.

[03:50:00] Please do not ask our parents and our caregivers to take on the additional burden of figuring out transportation or financing for programs in other neighborhoods or schools. We have what we need in our community. That makes our lives exponentially harder, not better, and improving the lives of your residents is what we voted to put you there for and why I know you all do this work.

[03:50:22] Taking this center away does not strengthen our community. It weakens it. And if you want strong neighborhoods, rising community values, and thriving local economies, you have to invest in the communities creating that value, and that's Huntington. We, the people of Huntington, are doing our part.

[03:50:37] There is clear evidence of that. Now it's time for you to decide if you will stand with us on this. Please do not end county programming at the Huntington Community Center. This decision affects real working people, my neighbors, my friends, my community members, people I love, just trying to do our best.

[03:50:56] I ask you to do right by us and not leave us behind thank you for your time and your consideration thank you Dorothy appreciate it speaker number 72 is Casey Scott to be followed by Jill Norcross and Anika Raman welcome good evening members of the board my name is Casey Scott and I'm here about the Huntington Community Center as well or more broadly what it means to our community our community supervisor Stork thank you every community is composed of the places the people and the activities that happen there. Situated just about the middle of our neighborhood is the

[03:51:34] Huntington Community Center. I think of it as the heart of Huntington, our place. There's a piece of public art out front, a concrete triangle with a hole in it, one of only a handful in our area that strikes me every time I see it. There are at least 18 apartment buildings within a quarter mile radius of the center, give or take, and hundreds of homes, hundreds of houses, all home to community members with more on the way. We are renters, first-time homeowners, families looking to grow, kids looking for ways to stay out of trouble, and seniors, some of whom have called the Huntington

[03:52:09] home for decades, are people. There are a couple of small parks where people bring kids, streets and paths where we walk our dogs in the community center. Small children walk in groups to and from because of the after-school care and the programs. Last Saturday, there was an Easter egg hunt. Teens dribble basketballs on the sidewalk as they go to the only basketball court in a safely walkable distance. My community association has our annual dinner there, and when I went in to check the rates for renting it out, I stumbled into a talk about the different plants and animals in our

[03:52:44] neighborhood. It has also been my polling place, and every election day, I see my neighbors taking up their civic responsibility and voting in the place that is near their home, on the work commute, where they've been for these programs, and a place that they know and rely on.

[03:53:02] As you've heard, housing, child care, and all-around affordability are recognized as ongoing crises, and the programs the county provides there are some of the best cost-effective tools that our area has. Withdrawing funding and programming from the center hits people in hard times, and that's not the community I want, nor is it the leadership I've come to expect.

[03:53:24] I moved to Huntington seven years ago, and I still refer to it as one of the last semi-affordable places around here. And after a very mobile life, my first time owning a home, the first thing that helped me feel settled was that center.

[03:53:46] And as a part of it, everyone is when they're there. Excuse me. I want to state plainly that stopping programming and support for the Huntington Community Center isn't just cutting a line in a budget.

[03:54:07] It's cutting at the heart of our neighborhood, and I know that ours isn't the only one. You all have a lot of weight that you have to make with these decisions, or that you have to manage. And I know you have a lot to balance, and I hope your minds aren't already set.

[03:54:23] I hope what we say makes a difference in your process. Our center is special, the programs are meaningful, and the public support, the county's continued support is vital. Thank you for your time and

your work, and while you've heard many more nuanced statements about taxation, I'll say simply, increase taxes on corporations, millionaires, and billionaires.

[03:54:43] Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 73 is Jill Norcross, followed by Annika Rahman, Diane Buckley. If I called your name, please be ready to testify. Welcome. Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity to speak tonight.

[03:55:00] My name is Jill Norcross, and I am a 22-year resident of Fairfax County in the Hunter Mill District and a longtime affordable housing and human service advocate. First, I want to thank this Board of Supervisors for all of your support and prioritization of affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and supportive services.

[03:55:17] We've made tremendous progress, and now is not the time to shift focus from doing what we know is working. I personally view housing affordability in our county as an equity problem with real, actionable solutions. So I put into chat, GPT, I did, a question about the One Fairfax equity policy and the most tangible, real-world implementation of the policy.

[03:55:40] And the response was clear, that where you see this policy show up is in budgeting. A very challenging task that you have before you to balance the needs of the whole community by showing your priorities on how we choose to spend our resources. So I dug a little deeper in the chat, and that's what funding priorities are making progress on the One Fairfax equity initiative.

[03:55:59] And the number one way we're making progress has been in housing and neighborhood livability. So it appears we are getting a good return on our investments made in producing and preserving affordable housing. So now is the time to move forward on your own budget guidance to fund two pennies of the real estate tax rate by this year in FY 2027, which is absolutely essential to achieve our 10,000-unit goal and to take advantage of current opportunities and partnerships.

[03:56:26] We have seen the federal government step up, surprisingly, to increase the low-income housing tax credit program last year, which is the foundation of our production engine. And this week, we've seen the state step up to enact pro-housing and affordable housing legislation that will make it easier to build housing that is affordable to all.

[03:56:42] We are excited to learn more about the recommendation from Chairman McKay's Housing Board Matter and the Housing Task Force, who will use best practices to expedite housing production in the county to address rising prices and costs. We have a fantastic HCD staff and incredible resources through the RHA who can leverage funds to support affordable housing development partners who are literally waiting for future development opportunities in our county.

[03:57:06] We know Fairfax County needs more housing, period, for many reasons, economic development, family success and upper mobility, and increasing our tax base. But bottom line, we know the inequities that exist, as 52% of our renter residents are severely cost burdened, spending more than half their income on housing costs.

[03:57:25] And the greatest shortage of housing remains for households at 60% AMI and below, and I will underline, frankly, well below 60% AMI, we know the market cannot build or preserve housing to serve our most vulnerable residents without these local subsidies.

[03:57:43] So with all the demonstrated and reconfirmed need analysis, momentum from other government partners, our success in solving this problem, our continued goals, your vision, I do respectfully request that we continue to hold each other accountable for what we said we would do and to continue to make progress in Fairfax County on our goals.

[03:58:01] Thank you. Thank you, Joe. Our next speaker is Anika Raman, to be followed by Diane Buckley. We'll have a caller, and then Amanda Campbell. Welcome. Thank you. - Hello, Chairman McKay and the Board of Supervisors. My name is Anika Rahman, and I serve as a Fairfax Director for Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, also known as NAVAHA.

[03:58:21] NAVAHA works to increase the supply and ensure the equitable access to affordable housing across Northern Virginia through education, advocacy, and community partnership. I'm also speaking today as someone who's worked in Fairfax for a long time but cannot afford to live here. And I'm not alone. I think about my coworkers and friends, and we all have strong, stable, well-paying jobs.

[03:58:39] Someone you would describe as did everything right. Despite that, we still cannot afford to buy a home or live in Fairfax. I have a job and a half, and I serve as director roles in both, and still cannot afford to live here. The issue is that Fairfax simply has become out of reach for many of us, including dedicated public service and professionals who contribute to this community every day despite being financially responsible.

[03:59:00] As you know, the board director set forward a plan to reach the 10,000 units affordable housing goals, and Fairfax County has become a regional leader in using public land to create affordable housing. As the last fiscal year, the county established a baseline dedication of one quarter cents of the real estate tax for affordable housing.

[03:59:19] In previous years, third quarter reviews often result in additional carryover investment, but this year and last year, that additional funding did not come through. That's why increasing this commitment to reach the two cents targeted by 2027 is so critical. It ensures reliable long-term funding and follow through on the county stated promising goals prior budget guidance.

[03:59:44] The urgent, the need is urgent. Here, updated housing needs show that a significant shortage of home affordable housing households at 60% of area median income and below. Only 13% of units produced between 2021 and 2025 were affordable to families making less than 100% AMI.

[04:00:00] Lower income households are disproportionately impacted. Among renters earning less than \$75,000 per year, 87% of them are cost-burden, and 52% are severely cost-burden, spending more than half of their income in rent. At the same time, a family of four now needs to earn an income of \$230,000 to afford the median home in Fairfax County, while the median household income is \$164,000.

[04:00:25] That gap continues to widen, pushing out not only low-income families, but also middle-income professionals who are essential to this community. Fairfax has the right strategy in place, along with strong pipeline of projects and development partners ready to build. Continued progress will require reliable, sustainable, continued funding alongside state, federal, private, and equity investments.

[04:00:46] We urge you to support the fully and fund the path to the \$0.02 goal. Thank you so much for your time. Thank you. Speaker number 75, Diane Buckley. Is Diane Buckley here? OK, to be followed by Mitchell. Chris Bell will do on the phone.

[04:01:01] Amanda Campbell, if you're here, please come on down, be ready to testify. Welcome. We're on speaker 75. Thank you. Good evening, chairman and members of the board. My name is Diane Buckley. I reside in the Mount Vernon district in Fairfax County, and I'm the proud parent of two girls, Brielle and Lincoln, who both have the opportunity and benefit of an enrollment in the all ages read together program.

[04:01:29] I'm here, ready to share what All Ages Read Together has meant to my family. My daughter Brielle joined the program a little late in February 2025 when we found out about it. When she started, we received feedback that she was struggling with listening to feedback and understanding classroom expectations.

[04:01:48] As a parent, that's a hard thing to hear, and it made me realize how much more support she needed to get ready for the classroom environment. I remember wishing I had known about the art program sooner, but even starting late, the impact was undeniable.

[04:02:05] By the end of the program, her teacher told us that Brielle had the best end-of-the-year assessment she had ever seen and that she was fully ready for kindergarten. From where she started, that meant everything. I remember crying tears of joy as I read that message to my husband.

[04:02:24] Today, her kindergarten teacher describes her as a leader in the classroom, someone who follows routines, meets expectations, and can be relied on. This is a remarkable transformation from where she began.

[04:02:41] I am now witnessing transformation happen again with my second daughter, who is currently in the program. At first, she didn't even want to go. Now she can't wait. She is more confident, more willing to speak up, and her communication skills have grown so much in a short period of time.

[04:03:04] Recently, I received feedback on her from her art teacher, who is here today, that she was so happy to be here, talking with everyone, asking, and volunteering. If you knew Lincoln, this is a miracle in itself, as shy as she is.

[04:03:21] But what surprised me the most is this, art didn't just change my children's experience, it helped me as a parent. Because of what I learned from the program and through the program, I was able to prepare my second daughter differently.

[04:03:38] I had conversations with her about classroom expectations before she even started, something I didn't know to do before. That made a difference from day one. It also taught me the value and the need to be an engaged parent. This program creates a ripple effect.

[04:03:58] It builds confidence in children and equips parents at the same time. And ultimately, that supports our kindergarten teachers by sending them children and parents who are prepared and ready. Families like me who are in the gap don't just benefit from art.

[04:04:15] We rely on it. I respectfully ask you to restore funding so that children in Fairfax County can have the same strong start as my daughters did. Those early experiences matter, and they allow children to start off on the right foot. I am so thankful that mine got to.

[04:04:31] I want more to happen. Thank you for your time and for listening. Thank you very much. We're on speaker number 76, Mitchell Crispell. Is Mitchell connected on the phone? Can you hear me okay? I'm here. Can you hear me? Yes, we can. Welcome. The floor is yours.

[04:04:46] Thank you. My name is Mitch Crispell. I'm the Director of Real Estate Development at True Ground Housing Partners. We're a leading nonprofit affordable housing developer in the region. We have about 230 affordable homes in Fairfax County right now at our Oakwood Meadows and Ildis Overlook Project and another 500 under construction in Tyson's at the Exchange.

[04:05:07] And we're also so excited to be getting down to business on the Dulles Green Project and really eager to do more work in the county. And that's why I'm here today to urge you to support affordable housing investments above and beyond the levels proposed in the county executive fiscal year 27 budget. Amidst a difficult fiscal environment, we are really grateful for your continued commitment to housing.

[04:05:28] The one and a quarter cents of real estate tax for housing in the budget will definitely be sufficient to build several dedicated projects per year. But we need more than that, and that's why we are here today to join with other housing organizations to call for a full two cents of real estate tax dedicated to affordable housing.

[04:05:45] There are many projects that are shovel-ready and only need funding to close their budget gap. This extra funding would enable the county to meet its own goal of producing 10,000 net new committed affordable homes by 2034, which is an extremely laudable goal that the board has set.

[04:06:02] Building these homes is so important because Fairfax County remains unaffordable for too many. You just heard from Jill and Anika about some of the stats, so I won't restate those. But as you know, affordable housing is out of reach for the vast majority of low- and middle-income workers in the region who often have to commute from far away.

[04:06:18] So providing this housing for them is critical for a functioning economy. We understand that you have a difficult job in deciding how to allocate the county's limited financial resources, and so we humbly ask that you prioritize affordable housing. To close, please also consider a few non-budgetary actions the county can take to increase housing affordability by increasing the supply of housing overall.

[04:06:39] Here are three quickly. First, adopt the permit review and site plan streamlining measures identified in the recent Housing Task Force Draft Action Plan. Second, please continue making public land available for housing development, which has already led to many very successful projects and the county is a leader in this area.

[04:06:56] And third, please support comprehensive plans and zoning changes that would allow for more housing, such as the many private applicants that have proposed new housing through the site-specific plan amendment process. Thank you for your time and continued attention to housing current and future county residents.

[04:07:12] Thank you very much. We're on speaker number 77, Amanda Campbell. Is Amanda Campbell here? Okay. Come on down to be followed by Judith Harbeck, Janelle Williams, Eric Goupleroad.

[04:07:29] Welcome. County special education PTA. I'm speaking tonight as an individual. I'm here to advocate for the county speech and hearing program as well as fully funding the FCPS transfer request. I have a 13 year old daughter with disabilities in FCPS who also receives significant private therapies and is on the CCC plus waiver. The county executive's justifications for cutting the speech and hearing program, private sector capacity, Medicaid and school based services demonstrate a clear disconnect with the lived reality of Fairfax County families like mine. After eight years with the same provider, we are being forced to find a new speech therapist as our insurance stopped covering our current one. The only

[04:08:09] in-network pediatric option has no appointments after 3 p.m. for the foreseeable future and at least a three-month wait list during school hours. Many private practices don't accept Medicaid or any insurance at all. Where is the private sector capacity that the county states exists? The document then indicates that schools can or should provide these services.

[04:08:28] They already can't. Speech services are among the hardest to obtain in FCPS because, as you've heard from multiple SLPs, staffing is insufficient to meet the need. Adding more children to their caseload without the funds for appropriate staffing helps no one, least of all the students. Even when services are in place, they are not stable. My daughter had five different SLPs last year due to constant staff turnover. Every justification for these cuts collapses under the realities families are living. Please do not move forward with this reduction.

[04:08:57] This dovetails into why the county needs to fully fund FCPS. While I've heard some supervisors lament about how school population is declining while fcps's budget is rising i do not hear recognition of the fact that the needs of students are rising between 2016 and 2026 there has been a 62 percent increase in cat b level 2 services being provided by fcps these are services provided to students most typically accessing an adapted curriculum and who receive special education services for 50 or more of their day at the same time state documentation changes have shifted students from the Virginia Alternative Assessment Program into SOL track classes without the foundational skills those courses require.

[04:09:36] Students' needs are increasing rapidly in FCPS, and that requires increased investment in staff services and resources. In November, FCPS identified areas that would be at risk if they are not fully funded, which includes many special education-related positions, including elementary special education department chairs.

[04:09:53] With the rise in unlicensed and provisionally licensed staff teaching special education, department chairs are vital to ensuring both staff and students have the support they need. You've heard from numerous special education staff and related service providers like speech therapists who are telling you how they are drowning and how the status quo is not sustainable.

[04:10:10] As a parent, I am here to tell you our students and families are drowning as well. I understand that difficult budget decisions need to be made, and I appreciate that the shortfall is less this year. While I also appreciate that the General Assembly has done so much for education during its session, it's irresponsible for the county to rely on the state to fill in this gap when history shows we cannot rely on that support. The county needs to fully fund FCPS based on what we know today, not what the state may or may not provide. We should not balance this budget based on the backs of our neediest students. Thank you. Thank you. Speaker number 78 is Judith Harbeck.

[04:10:45] Is Judith here? Oh, Judith is on the phone. Can you hear me okay? Yes, I can hear you. Welcome. the floor is yours. Yes. Okay. Well, good evening. I'm Judy Harbeck, a co-chair of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations. As the name implies, the MVCCA represents dozens of homeowner associations in the Mount Vernon Magisterial District and has done so for more than 40 years.

[04:11:09] You've previously been sent our resolution with respect to the fiscal year 27 county budget. I personally have been a Fairfax County resident for about 50 years, and I've testified before you numerous times, although this is the first time by phone as an individual and on behalf of MVCCA.

[04:11:27] This year, perhaps surprisingly and unlike most years, I am here to urge you to adopt the county executive's fiscal year 2027 advertised budget as published with only a few minor requests. The elephant in the room, of course, is the proposed residential property tax rate.

[04:11:45] As homeowners, we understand that although the rate is unchanged from fiscal year 26, virtually all of us will pay more and some substantially more because the assessed value of our homes has increased. Not a bad thing in most circumstances. We generally want our homes to hold or preferably increase in value. And one very large part of the reason our homes are valued and sought after is the services and amenities Fairfax is known for. Low crime, excellent police and fire, good parks, recreational facilities, and a top-tier school system with excellent staff and a nationwide reputation.

[04:12:22] These things don't come cheap. Unfortunately, the cost at present must be substantially borne by homeowners. We understand this is caused primarily by Commonwealth underfunding of the county and especially the school system to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

[04:12:40] We urge you to continue to proactively and in concert with our similarly affected neighbors to address these failures of the Commonwealth to live up to its responsibilities. This is in many years an unusually uncertain year as well.

[04:12:55] The federal government continues to make significant changes in organizations' funding and staffing, which will very likely not be particularly helpful to Fairfax residents or its economy. The national economic indicators are especially volatile.

[04:13:11] On the plus side, we hope the new administration in the Commonwealth may address some funding inequities, And a full-year implementation of the meals tax will perhaps address or at least stabilize the tax burden. But in uncertain times, we think we need to stay the course and protect our quality of life, even if it may prove painful on tax day.

[04:13:33] So we ask you to at least keep the fiscal year 26 tax rate for fiscal year 27. The other elephant in the room, if I may, is funding for FCPS, which you've heard quite a bit about in these hearings already.

[04:13:50] But the shortfall between the school board transfer request and that proposed by the county executive is, to my recollection, the smallest in years. We commend schools' efforts to keep costs in check, even though we know there are significant challenges that were not included for funding, such as reduced class size, additional help for special education, staffing ratio restorations in some areas, middle school sports and similar programs, and the list goes on.

[04:14:18] Providing teacher compensation adequate to maintain a highly qualified staff, since teacher salaries are about 85% of the school budget, will also be a continuing issue in this highly competitive market. New construction and overdue renovation needs will also put pressure on the school budget, as will potential cutbacks or elimination of federal education funds.

[04:14:42] We urge you to use your best efforts to close the funding shortfall through the use of the discretionary fund set up and or any additional revenue or government support which may be realized as the year goes forward.

[04:14:59] On some other issues, stormwater management is a significant problem in Mount Vernon and across the county. Additional funding will be needed in future years, and we urge you to include

consideration in future budgets. Similarly, the sewage interceptor environmental disaster in Maryland highlights what can occur if critical infrastructure is not maintained properly and or upgraded.

[04:15:23] We believe this problem needs to be robustly addressed in future budgets, in addition to already known renovations needed for various county assets, including upkeep of our park system. In conclusion, and to kind of wrap up, we support adoption of the county executive's proposed budget for fiscal year 27, but in the hope that some additional funds may be found for the things that we have specified here.

[04:15:53] And mostly, we thank you for your service and for continued attention through this grueling process, another example of the responsible governance which helps make Fairfax County a desirable place to live. Thank you. Thank you, Judith. We are now on speaker number 79, Janelle Williams. Is Janelle Williams here? Okay. I know Eric Gupplerud is here. He'll be speaker number 80, and we'll hear from him now to be followed by Greg Kreider and Pam LaGoughlin. Welcome, Eric.

[04:16:28] Thank you. Good evening. Before I get into the numbers, I want to acknowledge something. This board has made real commitments to climate action, and that work is paying off. The excellent Climate Action Dashboard shows it. What I'm here to ask is that you build on it. Our buildings are costing us more than they should, not because we're being wasteful, but because a lot of our infrastructure is old and old systems waste energy.

[04:16:58] The good news is that we know how to fix it, and we've already proven it, that it works here in Fairfax. Here's where we are. In 2025, Fairfax County government spent \$31 million on energy for its facilities. That's actually up 2% from 2019, even though we used 12% less energy.

[04:17:21] The reason? Natural gas was up 53% over that interval. When your equipment is old and inefficient, you feel every price hike much harder than you need to. The advertised 2027 budget and the CIP identifies \$87.6 million in needed HVAC and electrical system upgrades across the county facilities.

[04:17:48] The FY2027 budget proposes \$9.8 million, which leaves nearly \$78 million unfunded, and 57% of our buildings are more than 30 years old. Mechanical and electrical systems have a useful life of between 15 and 30 years.

[04:18:07] We're running past that in a lot of places, and it shows. On the school side, and I recognize that the school board governs FCPS independently, the picture is similar and in some ways more severe. Now here is what gives me confidence that the investment works.

[04:18:25] 75 county facilities cut their energy use by 15% or more between 2019 and 2025. Those buildings saved 26 million kilowatt hours in a single year, between \$600,000 and a million dollars in avoided costs just in 2025.

[04:18:46] The clearest examples of that are right here. Six rec centers received comprehensive HVAC, building controls, and electrical upgrades. The results are dramatic. Mount Vernon cut energy by 51%, Cub Run by 39%, Spring Hill by 36%.

[04:19:05] These weren't modest gains. These were transformations. So here's what I'm asking for with full awareness that 2027 will be a difficult budget here. Develop a multi-year plan in the CIP to work down the backlog in the county and FCPS facilities.

[04:19:25] aging systems don't get cheaper to fix. They fail at the worst times and waste energy every day until they do. Thank you. Thank you, Eric. Speaker number 81 is Eric, I'm sorry, Greg Kreider, and I don't see Greg. Pam McLaughlin. It's Pam McLaughlin here, speaker number 82. Okay, speaker number 83 has submitted video testimony. If we could run that at this time.

[04:19:53] Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

[04:20:11] I wish that I could be there in person, but I have a family conflict, unfortunately, so I will be reading my testimony on video. My name is Lucy Bachnick, and I am an occupational therapist and healthcare researcher specializing in aging in place and home modifications.

[04:20:29] The primary goal of occupational therapy is to help individuals recovering from injury, illness, or disability return to the activities that are most important and meaningful to them. For many people, that means being able to care for themselves and remain in their homes.

[04:20:45] Ensuring that a home is safe and adapted to a person's physical abilities is essential to making that possible. I chose to volunteer with Rebuilding Together because as both a clinician and a researcher, I understand how impactful this work is. The organization strategically uses occupational therapy volunteers to evaluate clients with unique or complex needs.

[04:21:08] We help to ensure that the home repairs and modifications provided are appropriate, effective, and long-lasting so that every dollar invested leads to the greatest possible benefit for the client. For example, we assist in evaluating whether a client would truly benefit from a stair lift, an intervention that can be life-changing but also costly.

[04:21:29] Our role is to make sure that these decisions are guided by clinical expertise so that resources are used where they will have the greatest impact. The benefits of this work extend beyond the individual households served. Rebuilding together primarily assists low-income older adults, which is a population that is at particularly high risk for falls.

[04:21:50] There is strong evidence that relatively simple modifications, such as installing grab bars and railing, can significantly reduce the risk of falls and prevent serious injuries. These injuries are not only devastating for individuals and families, but are also costly for our health system.

[04:22:10] I support Rebuilding Together, not only personally, but also as a scientist and a taxpayer. The work they do helps people remain safe and independent in their homes while preventing injuries that lead to expensive medical care. In that sense, their work is both compassionate and fiscally responsible.

[04:22:29] I respectfully urge you to increase funding to Rebuilding Together for the health, safety, and well-being of our community. Thank you for your time and your consideration. Thank you very much for that. We now are at the end of our speakers list.

[04:22:45] I am going to go back to one time, call anyone that we missed here who was not here at the time that I called your name. And I'm going to start with, let me ask you, Speaker 34, Marianella Funes, is here. Okay, come on down.

[04:23:03] How about Speaker 35, Odetta del Sol? Speaker 36, Franklin Molina? Speaker 37, Elder Antonio? If I just called your name, please be ready to testify. We're going to take testimony in that order. Welcome, Marianela.

[04:23:22] Thank you, Chairman McCain and supervisors. My name is Marianela and community organizer with Tender for Worker United. For almost 40 years, we have been organizing low-income communities of color across Northern Virginia, including South Fairfax County.

[04:23:46] We recognize the county's efforts to acknowledge the vulnerability of our mobile home communities. In 2013, the board supervisor allocated \$70,000 for a home repair program.

[04:24:02] However, three years have passed and zero of the families have received the help yet. Communities are currently facing high rent and utility increases, risk of flooding area, and forced displacement due to Route 1 corridor development.

[04:24:29] Mobile homes are clearly the most affordable housing and societal housing, and we need the county officials to commit to preserving the existing affordable housing. On the other hand, according to the county's housing need assessment report, your own data emphasize how low-income households are disproportionately suffering from the housing crisis.

[04:24:58] For example, the report states rental housing market currently has a major gap for 60% of the median income and below. Critical shortage of housing for lower income residents.

[04:25:16] Extreme cost burner with few housing choices. The only way families can afford to live here is by creating more housing at the 30, 40, and 50 percent of the median income. Although the federally founded Section 8 program exists, only one in four Fairfax residents obtain a voucher due to the family.

[04:25:42] It's not a secret that we are in a housing crisis and the local government needs to take serious action to face the problem. We need to be proactive and meet the needs of the communities.

[04:26:00] The Department of Housing and Community Development and the county as a whole have not done enough to address this dire situation. When you work in the 2027 budget, we urge you to dedicate \$15 million for mobile home preservation and land acquisition.

[04:26:24] Dedicate \$14 million for the creation of a locally founded voucher program for low-income households in Fairfax County, earning 60% of the median income and below. We really need more funds for current emergency rental assistance program.

[04:26:45] Also, we need to increase the \$0.02 target for affordable housing. You have the power to do this. You have the power to change. And please, we really need you to take into consideration our community.

[04:27:06] And thank you. Thank you. We're on speaker number 36, Franklin Molina, to be followed by Elder Antonio. I know we have translation services here. Welcome. Good evening, President McKay and Supervisors.

[04:27:29] Good evening, Chairman McKay and Supervisors. Thanks for your attention to be able to express our concerns. Thanks for your attention so we can express our concerns.

[04:27:41] Mi nombre es Franklin Molina. Tengo aproximadamente 15 años viviendo en la propiedad Lafayette Apartment. Mis hijos son adolescentes y trabajan en el área. Mi esposa provee cuidado infantil. Yo trabajo en construcción. También amenizo los fines de semana como eventos de DJ.

[04:28:10] I'm Franklin Molina. I've been living in the Lafayette apartments for about 15 years. My kids are teenagers and they work in the area. My wife provides child care. I work in construction and I DJ

parties on the weekends. Yo represento a la clase obrera de Fairfax, donde nos vemos obligados a tener dos trabajos para poder cubrir nuestros gastos por alto costo de alquiler en la zona.

[04:28:38] La renta nos sube cada año entre 150 a 300 dólares. Y lo peor son las malas condiciones de los arrendadores. No se preocupan por el mantenimiento adecuado de las unidades como lumbreras, parqueo y muchos roedores y espacios públicos que no hay accesible.

[04:29:08] I represent the Fairfax working class, those who are obliged to work two jobs to pay high rents in the area. The rent increases every year between \$150 and \$300, and the worst of it are the bad conditions. The owners are in concern with giving proper maintenance to the apartments, to the lighting, to the parking, to roading problems, nor to the public spaces.

[04:29:33] Nuestra propiedad recibe crédito de impuesto de parte del gobierno, sin embargo estos apartamentos no son accesibles para personas que ganamos el salario mínimo. Un apartamento de dos cuartos cuesta aproximadamente \$2,000 a más mensuales.

[04:29:54] Es triste nuestra situación porque nosotros aportamos a la economía del condado y muchos no tenemos acceso a servicios de salud o recreación. Our property receives government tax credits, but these apartments still aren't affordable for those of us who earn the minimum wage.

[04:30:16] A two-bedroom apartment costs more than \$2,000 a month. Our situation is sad because we contribute to the county economy and many of us don't have access to health and recreation services.

[04:30:48] At the state level, we hope laws will be passed to protect renter's rights and to comply with the landlord and renter's law.

[04:31:09] This would be a great opportunity for you all to support us in having better housing conditions. to act in a proactive and creative way to hear the needs and proposals that are born from the community, investments in luxury apartments will not stop the current crisis of living.

[04:31:38] Fairfax is public. Fairfax is affordable. Housing crisis needs local government to act creatively and proactively and listen to the needs and proposals born of our community. Investing in luxury apartments won't stop the housing crisis.

[04:31:53] Por todo lo anterior, les presentamos la siguiente propuesta. Primeramente, aumento de dos centavos para el año fiscal 2027 para garantizar vivienda accesible. So we'd like to propose the following, a two cent increase to fiscal year 2027 to guarantee affordable housing.

[04:32:16] Un programa de vivienda que tome en cuenta las familias que ganamos menos del 60% del ingreso medio del área, como por ejemplo, un voucher de vivienda.

[04:32:31] Un incremento en los programas de ayuda de renta. Muchas gracias a todos por su atención.

[04:32:51] Thanks to all for your time and attention. Thank you. We are on speaker number 37, Elder Antonio. Welcome. Buenas tardes, Presidente McKay y Supervisores.

[04:33:06] Yo represento a la comunidad de trailers móviles de Alexandria.

[04:33:19] Good evening, Chairman McKay and Supervisors. Thank you for your attention and letting us share our opinions and concerns. Gracias por prestarnos su atención para poder expresar nuestras preocupaciones y opiniones. Mi nombre es Hélder Antonio y tengo varios años viviendo en Audubon.

[04:33:40] Tengo dos hijos que van a la escuela acá. Mi esposa y yo trabajamos a tiempo completo. Yo trabajo en construcción y mi esposa hace trabajo de limpieza. I'm Hélder Antonio. I've been living in Audubon for many years. I have two children who go to school here and my wife and I both work full time.

[04:33:57] I work in construction, and she does cleaning jobs. Para nosotros, las casas móviles son la única forma de vivienda a la que podemos acceder en esta zona. Los costos por casa y apartamentos son muy altos y nosotros no podemos, somos de bajos recursos.

[04:34:16] Aunque queramos, no podemos rentar un lugar más amplio. For us, mobile homes are the only housing option we can afford. In our area, the cost of housing and apartments is very high, and we have few resources. Even though we'd like to, we can't run a bigger space.

[04:34:32] Han sido décadas de olvido y de nada sirve el desarrollo si no tomamos en cuenta las comunidades ya existentes en la zona. Nosotros también aportamos a la economía local, a la cultura y al crecimiento de Fairfax.

[04:34:49] This has been forgotten for decades. Development won't do any good if the existing communities aren't taken into account. We as well contribute to the Fairfax and local economy, culture, and growth. Queremos ser escuchados en lo siguiente.

[04:35:05] We'd like to ask. Número uno, que se designen 15 millones de dólares para la preservación de casas móviles. 15 million be designated for preserving mobile homes. Número dos, urge un plan específico para las comunidades que estamos en alto riesgo de inundación y zonas de desarrollos.

[04:35:26] We'd also like to ask for an urgent plan specifically for communities at high risk of flooding or redevelopment. Número tres, a un aumento para alcanzar el objetivo de dos centavos para el año fiscal 2027, para garantizar vivienda asequible.

[04:35:44] Increases to reach the objective of two cents in fiscal year 2027 to guarantee affordable housing. Muchas gracias por su tiempo y por escuchar nuestras peticiones. Que Dios los bendiga. Thank you for your time. Thank you for listening to our petitions, and may God bless you all.

[04:36:01] Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony. I am, yes. Yes, I think we still have a little time, and we have somebody from the Solidarity Group here, and Karen was signed up to speak, but she couldn't make it.

[04:36:23] She's a community leader. Which speaker are we talking about? What number are we talking about? No type. It's okay. There's no one else registered. There was still another two and a half minutes on the clock.

[04:36:40] There was still two and a half minutes? Oh, okay. Then we'll allow her to speak if we can start. But I really need you to state your name and your address, and we don't do this here. I'm breaking all the rules here because there's a lot of people who have signed up who are waiting to speak.

[04:36:56] I'm going to let you speak this one time, but in the future we need people to arrive on time, Sign up ahead of time to speak, because it is very difficult following the speaker list and being fair to everyone. Thank you very much. Well, if you could state your name and address, please. My name is Patty Turner, 7611 Admiral Drive in Alexandria, Virginia.

[04:37:18] And good afternoon, Chairman McKay and supervisors, and I do appreciate this opportunity. I came with this group to support them, and I do agree with the issues. And I was asked to read this letter

for Karen Crowsdale, who could not be here because she's working this evening, and her boss would not give her the time off to come speak about her concerns.

[04:37:35] She does live in the Pendaw manufactured home park and she's very concerned about the fact that there's construction going on and there's development going on and she's concerned about losing her home and she's concerned about the fact that their community has been there for 55 years and she's not sure what's going to happen if the development happens and what the county is doing about the development process.

[04:37:57] So she wanted to express her concerns to the board and ask for consideration about what's going to be happening if the land gets developed and what's going to happen for these families that have been living there for so long. And that's all I wanted to share with you all. I don't want to take any more time, and I appreciate the fact that you let me speak.

[04:38:14] Thank you very much, and thank you for all your hard work. Have a good evening. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. I am now going to go through the list of speakers who were not here when I called their name. I'm going to go through it quickly. If you are here, please stand up. Come down here to where the clerk is to the right here so that we know that you're here.

[04:38:34] Brenna Diamantes, Jenny Chamby, Melissa Lativerde, Megan Bracolone, John Dister, Mark Vianney, Janelle Williams, Greg Kreider, Pam McLaughlin.

[04:39:03] Those are the speakers that I have signed up who were not here when I called their name. And let me see here. Yeah, so let's go with those first.

[04:39:25] Let's go in that order. If you could tell us what speaker number you were, state your name and address for the record so that we can follow along. Welcome. Good evening, Chairman McKay and Board of Supervisors. My name is John Dister. I'm speaker number 53. I live in Reston, and I'm a member of the Fairfax County Religious Affairs Committee.

[04:39:43] I'm here to speak to you on behalf of affordable housing. I recognize that the county's been through difficult budget challenges, but I'd like to respectfully remind the board of its priority for affordable housing over the years and its commitment to fund the Affordable Housing Development and Investment Fund.

[04:40:03] The market on its own, as previous speakers have made clear, is not building nearly enough affordable homes. So to remind the board respectfully, in 2019, it accepted a recommendation for building 5,000 new homes, new affordable homes by 2034.

[04:40:19] In March 2022, it raised that goal to 10,000, commendable goal, by 2034, and planned to contribute \$0.02 of the \$100 of the property valuation into the investment fund to achieve that goal.

[04:40:35] Because the Board has again noted the county's severe housing shortage, I and others have been advocating for the Board to meet its promise of \$0.02 on the \$100 of property valuation, which this year would amount to \$70 million approximately. So the graph that we've provided in our written testimony shows that the fund contributions from 2022 to 2026, and for three years, the fund was supplemented by ARPA funds and one-time county contributions, but in 2025 and 2026, it was funded by the budget allocation only.

[04:41:08] So it's still about \$25 million short of the annual contribution needed to build the 10,000 affordable homes that the board committed to in March 2022. So every year in its budget guidance, the board reiterates its goal of two pennies, explains why it did not meet the goal, and promises to do it next year.

[04:41:27] So our friends from Tennis Workers United, they had various signs. One of them was, please show some results. So just to quote from previous budget documents and statements from the board, the budget guidance for FY 2023 and FY 2024 said, quote, Expanding the inventory of affordable housing in the county continues to be one of the board's greatest priorities.

[04:41:52] The FY 2023 budget adds \$15 million in baseline funding towards this initiative, bringing total baseline funding to just over one penny on the real estate tax rate. The budget guidance for 2025 and 2026 said, as reflected in the board's budget guidance for the past few years, the county is committed to taking steps necessary to reach our goal of a minimum of 10,000 new affordable homes by the year 2034.

[04:42:19] The budget guidance for 2026 and 2027 said, quote, affordable housing continues to be a top priority. And once again, the board is reaffirming the goal of meeting a minimum of 10,000 new affordable housing units by the year 2034. This will require baseline funding equivalent to two pennies on the real estate tax rate.

[04:42:37] So the FY2026 budget dedicates an additional one and one quarter penny on the real estate tax rate, bringing baseline resources to one and one quarter pennies. It's hoped that the equivalent of two pennies in the real estate tax rate will be reached by FY2027. We admire the commitments you've made.

[04:42:53] We know that you take them seriously, and we ask that you act on them by funding 2% of the property valuation rate. Thank you very much. Thank you. Our next speaker is Mark Vianney, speaker number 52. Chairman McKay and members of the board, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak tonight.

[04:43:13] You've had a long day. You have my testimony, so I will be very, very brief. I just wanted to say, for the record, my name is Mark Vianney. I'm a proud resident of the Mount Vernon District and of Fairfax County directly. When I say proud resident, I mean that I've been a lifelong, almost lifelong resident of Fairfax County.

[04:43:32] And, you know, I'm proud of this county. I'm proud of my community. And I'm proud of this board, just as I have been historically a Fairfax County government. Fairfax, I would do a lot of work in other jurisdictions. And Fairfax has historically been a leader and typically one of the adults in the room when it comes to dealing with complex issues.

[04:43:49] One of those issues, as you've heard from many people before me and probably more eloquent than, is the question of affordable housing. Affordable housing is multifaceted. It doesn't lend itself to one easy solution. It's a whole range of solutions that you were considering, and I appreciate your leadership on that.

[04:44:04] Those are market-based solutions, and those are solutions when the county has to step in directly as well. I appreciate all that you've done in terms of providing market-based solutions, particularly when it comes to, like, land planning and flexibility. The plan, the comprehensive plan amendments you adopted last year are already bearing fruit, allowing the market to react to that, and you'll see nice new

projects coming forward reacting and allowing properties to be redeveloped and imaginative use of the property.

[04:44:32] The county executive and his team are working with leadership of the Department of Planning and Development. You know, we're looking for regulatory flexibility. And those are meaningful discussions. And all of these things will ultimately end up allow the market to deliver units more efficiently and faster, and that's important, but that's not the entire range of what the solutions require. You know, this county has set up some very bold leadership goals, you know, for long-term planning and funding for that, and, you know, I know since we went ahead and did that, you know, the world seems to have changed over several times, you know, all kinds of new crises and stuff like that, and I appreciate all that you guys have to do in order

[04:45:12] to kind of balance various competing priorities and new things that they seem to almost blow up almost every other week or something like that. But I've seen this board act with courage and act with leadership. I've seen them act together as a board most recently, and I'm looking at you, Supervisor Lusk, individually on applications when they came forward.

[04:45:32] And I ask that you continue to fulfill that vision. I know there's a long-term proposal. Issues will arise that maybe you won't always reach funding goals immediately, but keep at it. This is what we need to have to make our community one and allow us to move forward together with all folks that make our community a better community.

[04:45:53] So with that, I thank you very much for your time. I urge your support and listen to the speakers who are more eloquent than me about the policies for funding. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. We're now going to hear from a speaker. I have Jerry Poggi, I see, is here, and he is speaker number 60.

[04:46:15] Welcome, Jerry. Wish I was 60. Thank you so much for this opportunity to testify this evening and for your leadership. I'm part of the third ask that came from the start of Mary Payton's testimony, in which we're requesting that you prioritize neighbors experiencing homelessness, our most vulnerable but bellwether residents, by tapping into our emergency contingency fund so wisely initiated last year because of looming federal uncertainties.

[04:46:53] 22 years of hypothermia sheltering with a multitude of faith community partners amply reveals the inherent worth and dignity of fellow citizens temporarily suffering the plight of homelessness and the greater personal and congregation rewards of serving their need.

[04:47:12] Yet federal recklessness looms larger this year. The Trump administration's proposed cuts and adverse rulemakings would savage poor neighbors. Our once federal priority of a war on poverty today morphs into a war on America's poor to pay for ruinous global conflicts and tariffs that further impoverishes Americans.

[04:47:38] Fairfax County depends heavily on federal funding and wise policies to stem the growing tide of homelessness. My written testimony provides additional evidence, but let me highlight a few details. This year, the president proposes a roughly 5% cut from the \$77.3 billion for HUD programs, zero funding programs that help finance construction and preservation of affordable homes, including the Home Investment Partnership Program and the Community Development Block Grants.

[04:48:14] The home program, for which Congress provided \$1.25 billion in FY26, is used for a wide variety of housing activities, including building and preserving affordable housing. CBDG received \$3.3 billion for its formula grant programs and \$3.16 billion for its economic development initiatives program in FY26.

[04:48:41] The Housing for the Elderly Program, which funds affordable, accessible housing for older adults, would be cut by \$72 million, and the Program for Persons with Disabilities would be cut by \$26 million, despite their manifest growing need.

[04:48:58] The FY27 request eliminates the Continuum of Care program, which helps prevent people from falling into homelessness, shelters people who are experiencing homelessness, and aims to provide homes with supportive services until a person can become maximally self-sufficient.

[04:49:19] Trump's budget provides no funding for the construction of new permanent supportive housing, our best tool for ending homelessness. I thought I had five minutes, but maybe I don't. I'll give you a second to sum up.

[04:49:36] I just want to say, again, repeat, that it's so important that our safety net evolves in conformity with these federal programs. Their potentially devastating loss prompts our county's FY 2027 request, provide emergency contingency funding should the dire federal budgets and policies ensue.

[04:50:02] We've got a rich religious, moral, and economic imperative that calls us to serve the increasing number of children, young adults, and elders at or near homelessness. Thank you so much. Thank you, Jerry. I have called again the names of all the individuals that had signed up. We're not here to speak presently. Is there anyone in the auditorium who is signed up who missed their slot to testify today only? Okay. Seeing and hearing none, that brings us to the end of day two of our public hearing for our budget. And with that, the board is in recess

[04:50:40] until 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 16th. We will see everyone tomorrow. Thank you.



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