

Leggett proposes curfew for Montgomery youth

Council to discuss 11 p.m., midnight limits on being out in public

by Erin Cunningham, Staff Writer

Children younger than 18 years old would not be allowed outdoors or in private businesses past 11 p.m. from Sunday to Thursday and past midnight on Friday and Saturday, according to a proposed curfew from Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett (D).

The curfew, which would need approval from the County Council to go into effect, would last until 5 a.m. the next day. Youth found breaking curfew would be taken to the nearest police station by police, the proposal states.

The curfew law is similar to one in place in the District of Columbia and Prince George's County.

County spokesman Patrick K. Lacefield said because Montgomery borders two jurisdictions with curfews for youth, the result is that many youth, including gang members, come to Montgomery at night. While the county has not as of yet seen an uptick in crime, Lacefield said it is only a matter of time.

Overall crime declined in Montgomery County last year, but there were more murders and burglaries, according to year-end 2010 statistics released by the Montgomery County Police Department.

Increases only were reported in two categories, according to police. Murders jumped from 12 in 2009 to 17 last year, and burglaries rose by more than 10 percent from 3,011 in 2009 to 3,323 in 2010.

The County Council is expected to discuss the proposal later today.