



COMMISSION ON AGING

Testimony by Judith Welles, Chair
Montgomery County Commission on Aging
before the
County Council on the County Executive's FY 13 Budget
April 11, 2012

I would like to thank the County Council and President Berliner for the opportunity to testify on the FY13 County budget and for your commitment to the needs of Montgomery County seniors.

I am testifying today on behalf of the County Commission on Aging. I am also testifying on behalf of a 93 year old woman, who raised her granddaughter, and lives in the home she bought more than 60 years ago that is too far for her to walk to any bus transportation. I am testifying on behalf of a couple, both in their 70s, who want to find one-floor affordable housing in Silver Spring to live in the same community where they have lived their entire lives.

There are many others, who live alone, who are isolated, and in need of the kinds of programs and activities in the FY 13 budget that can assure them dignity and vitality in their later years. The budget increases in the FY 13 budget will make a real difference in people's lives.

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging is working toward making our County a place where all residents can live their entire lives. We have proposed a senior agenda, with a vision that Montgomery County will be a Community for a Lifetime - a place for older adults to live safe, healthy and vital lives.

By the year 2020, the senior population of Montgomery County will increase by 74%, with approximately one-in-four residents over the age 60, compared to approximately 15 percent today. This tremendous demographic shift requires a new priority for senior issues.

The Commission on Aging commends the County Council for its leadership on many issues of concern to older residents and, also, for bringing experts in the field of aging together in its recent forum on senior issues.

We also recognize and appreciate the efforts of the County Executive in recent years, and in the proposed FY 13 budget, to respond to the needs of both the vulnerable, low income and the more healthy, vital older adults.

The County Executive's proposed FY 13 budget puts in place a secure foundation toward meeting the changing needs of a diverse aging population.

After several years of cutbacks to services to seniors, this budget includes increases to services for seniors across several departments. These enhancements will make an immediate impact on the quality of life for Montgomery County's seniors and deserve strong support.

While this proposed budget makes some key program improvements, the Commission on Aging is very concerned that pending changes at the state and federal level could adversely impact services for seniors.

Department of Health and Human Services

401 Hungerford Drive, 4th Floor, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 240-777-1120, FAX 240-777-1436
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs

The County needs to be prepared to continue to support and stand for services needed by the growing population of seniors.

The proposed FY13 budget adds almost \$2 million to senior initiatives across different county agencies. These funds are targeted to the most vulnerable seniors and to key areas that support the needs of our County's older adults who want to age in place, including transportation, nutrition and home care chore services, affordable housing, mental health, senior programming at recreation centers, and helping to prevent financial abuse. The Commission on Aging fully supports all of the County Executive's FY 13 budget enhancements for senior programs and services.

This budget is a building block toward a larger vision that will indeed make Montgomery County a Community for a Lifetime.

###