

## UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO -**FOR**- Proposed Amendment to the County Charter – Property Tax Limit

July 21, 2020

Local 1994 stands in full support of the Proposed Amendment to the County Charter on Property Tax Limit submitted on behalf of the County Executive.

The current charter amendment limits the countywide property tax revenues to the Consumer Price index (CPI). This revenue cap has prevented the county from realizing the benefits of growth in property tax assessments and has prevented the county from making critical investments in infrastructure and county services. We are happy that there is broad agreement on the council that property tax revenues must be decoupled from the rate of inflation.

While the current charter limit caps revenue to the CPI, that cap does not apply to homeowners. Individuals may see their property taxes increased by up to 10%, even when the tax rate stays the same or decreases. The County Executive's proposal to reduce the cap for owner-occupiers from 10% to 3% protects middle class homeowners who have seen the most rapid rate of increase in property assessments but struggle the most to pay those tax bills. Moreover, when confronted with the arcane language of charter amendments on the ballot in November, it is also something that the voter can easily understand- *this amendment will lower the cap on tax increases on my home.*

We are also **strongly opposed** to an amendment that maintains the requirement for a unanimous council vote to raise the tax rate. It is fundamentally undemocratic and further legitimizes a Ficker Amendment that has hamstrung this County. The composition of this council may change drastically in future years and ceding power to a lone council member could lead this county off a fiscal cliff. Philosophically, we believe that a simple majority vote is all that should be required, but the supermajority threshold in this amendment strikes a fair compromise and one that we believe voters will endorse.

It is an understatement to say that these are uncertain times. This pandemic has underscored the need for vital county services. We desperately need investment in County infrastructure. The Council will need to ability to react quickly to the challenges that we will surely be facing and that is why this amendment is crucial.

Give voters a real alternative to the new Ficker Amendment.

On behalf of our 8000 members, we urge you to vote to place the County Executive's County Charter Proposal on the ballot.