

April 18, 2023

My name is Franklin Potter and I am a resident in the Montgomery County Council District 4. I am a United States Air Force and DC National Guard veteran. I am also a social voice for the homeless.

I do sincerely believe that everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home. May I also add that I am a temporary resident of Progress Place. I honestly found my experience to be more than I anticipated. With a plethora of personalities and backgrounds, I witness people coming to Progress Place for many reasons and needs. The primary areas I have witnessed are hunger, housing and medical attention. The first two areas are professionally facilitated by staff and volunteers and I personally commend them all. Though all areas are covered professionally, the area of mental illness may need more assistance. I have personally witnessed clients who appear to be of sound mind, only to be revealed that they have various degrees of mental illness. With observing the care that staff renders, which in my opinion is above and beyond, there is still an area of advance attention that I see may be needed. With these experiences in mind, I believe these priorities should be funded in the FY2024 budget.

- Increased funding for Permanent Supportive Housing and the Housing Initiative Program. Currently, the recommended budget avoids a reduction in service, but we believe that if the county wants to end homelessness by 2025, it must fund an increase in these vital services.
- Increased funding for Rapid Rehousing Program. The County Executive's Budget Recommendation cuts the program; however, this is a successful program that, paired with more Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Housing Initiative Program (HIP), can become even more successful
- Increase funding for the Crisis Center with the goal of 24/7 staffing in Rockville, Germantown, and Silver Spring. I believe complex behavioral health emergencies require trained behavioral health professionals, so we must adequately fund these solutions.
- Support increased funding for Emergency Rental Assistance, as I believe prevention is vital to ending homelessness.
- Support for increased funding for affordable housing for lowest income renters and ask that these funds be used to address the shortage of affordable housing available to those at 0-30% of Area Median Income. Homelessness is a housing problem.

I would like to thank the County Council for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Franklin Potter