

4-11-23

Testimony before Montgomery County Council

Honorable Council members, thank you for the opportunity to make a few remarks before you today.

I am here to speak on behalf of the citizens in our County with developmental disabilities....and the many dedicated workers who support them...

There is a critical shortage of caretakers, without those caretakers, the individuals we serve cannot fully participate in our society.

The providers had requested the rate of inflation this year, nothing more.... But when the budget was released, I was shocked to see only a 2% increase from last year. I am asking the County Council to find a way to increase the supplement by 8.7%, which is desperately needed.

As I read the budget line by line, even the Montgomery County Parks got an increase of 7%. So I guess its parks 7 people with developmental disabilities 2.

Any increase in funds goes 100% to the direct care support workers. Under the proposed that our direct care support worker will only get a 3 cent per hour increase. With Montgomery County indexing the minimum wage to inflation, this is just unacceptable.

While the County attorneys have ruled that most nonprofits in our industry are exempt from the minimum wage increases.... What we are not exempt from market forces, those forces demand we give increases which our direct care workers truly deserve.

Over The Easter holiday I took my 2 stepchildren to an Easter egg hunt. There were about 100 children there. When they rang the bell to start the hunt, the children went wildly running in all directions collecting the eggs....I spotted a child about 7 years old with a developmental disability. He had a smile on his face and eagerly wanted to participate in the hunt. In spite of his disabilities he was moving slowly and was looking on the ground for eggs in places where the other kids had already picked them up. My heart went out for this child. At the end of the hunt many kids had 8-10 eggs in their basket, while the poor child I was watching, who tried as hard as he could had none. I interceded on his behalf and made sure he got a couple of eggs in his basket.

Honorable Council members, you have always stood with us, you have never let us down. I am asking you to intercede on our behalf, and make sure our basket is not empty this year.

Thank you for your support.