

Good evening President Stewart and Council Members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight.

My name is Glenn Fellman and I am a lifelong resident of Rockville 20853. My three children are MCPS graduates, as am I. I currently own two small local businesses, Headlight Restoration Montgomery and Montgomery Keepsakes, and I work for a third.

The county's proposed budget has a 790 million surplus or cushion, which the proposal says is to offset the potential loss of state and federal funding. That was a gross underestimation. We are poised to lose hundreds of millions in education dollars, money clawed back from Covid funds and money withheld due to the county's DEI policies. And hundreds of millions more from a host of other programs too. Meantime, thousands of our neighbors are or soon will be laid off. Government agencies in the county that purchase goods and services from the community, and whose employees spent their money at local businesses, are greatly diminished. And on top of all that, the stock market is tanking thanks to the tariff situation. Economists say Maryland is more likely to enter a recession than any other state.

Montgomery County is facing a likely financial crisis worse than anything any of you have seen in your lifetimes, Mr. Elrich excepted of course. Now is not the time for a status quo budget that pays for increases on the back of tax payers who are facing financial distress. Now is the time to make very hard choices. To make reductions, to suspend certain activities, to make decisions that will disappoint people. Frankly, the more people who are disappointed, the better you are probably doing.

Like many others here tonight, I originally came with some very specific and large requests – projects important to me. I cannot in good conscious make those requests. You have too hard a job to do. Everyone in this county must be prepared to make sacrifices. With that in mind, there are just two small things I will mention:

First - As I believe you all know, in addition to my business pursuits I am also the creator and publisher of The Montgonion. In that role, I have taken on the ceremonial office of Mayor of Glenmont, and over the past few months I have spent a great deal of time and

effort working with state and county agencies to clean up rubbish and pollution from commercial properties and state-controlled land in the Glenmont community. When neighborhoods get trashy, crime goes up. That's a fact. Please spare funding to the agencies or their sections whose work in this area is essential, including HCRA, DEP and MCDOT and Montgomery Parks.

Second – the proposed budget has a very modest increase for the Council itself. Please boost that amount and hire more communications staff. With all due respect, it is extremely frustrating trying to get a response to an email to the Council. I have written to you individually on numerous occasions, having to send several follow-up emails and make phone calls to get a response. My experience isn't unique. Many, many people have shared the same problem.

In closing, as Montgonion publisher it is fitting to share a quote from King Lear, a warning from The Fool to the King that is apropos to these budget discussions:

Have more than thou showest,

Speak less than thou knowest,

Lend less than thou owest