

Testimony Opposing the Proposed 3.5% Property Tax Rate Increase

Montgomery County Council Hearing – [Insert Date]

[Yvonne Kaufman]

[Silver Spring]

Good evening, Councilmembers.

My name is Yvonne Kaufman, and I am a resident of Montgomery County speaking in strong opposition to the proposed 3.5% increase in the property tax rate.

This proposal comes at a time when many families and seniors are already under mounting financial strain. Property assessments are projected to rise by nearly 20% over the next three years. Even without a rate hike, most homeowners will see sizable increases in their property tax bills. Adding a 3.5% rate increase on top of that is an unacceptable burden.

The stated purpose of this increase is to fund new school positions and programs. But it's important to be honest about where we stand. The education budget in Montgomery County has already seen **large and sustained increases over the past several years**. Yet the return on that investment has been, at best, mediocre. Academic performance has stagnated, classroom discipline and safety have become major concerns, and parents are increasingly questioning whether the system is truly delivering for students. More money is not the answer unless it's tied to real accountability and better results.

We also have to look at the broader economic context. The State of Maryland is already cutting its budget and raising taxes to cope with revenue shortfalls largely driven by the long-term effects of Trump-era economic policies — particularly aggressive tariff measures that have disrupted global trade, increased costs for consumers, and created volatility in the markets. Many families, especially retirees, have seen significant losses in their savings and investments due to these stock market fluctuations. In this environment, proposing a local tax hike feels not only poorly timed, but tone-deaf to the realities people are living through.

Montgomery County residents want strong schools and reliable public services. But we also need responsible governance. We can't keep defaulting to higher taxes every time a new initiative is introduced. Before asking residents to pay more, the County must demonstrate that existing funds are being used wisely and effectively.

I respectfully urge you to reject this proposed tax increase and focus instead on accountability, performance, and fiscal discipline. Our residents — especially those on fixed incomes — simply cannot afford to be squeezed any further.

Thank you.

Let me know if you'd like me to convert this into a Word document or tighten it up to fit a specific time limit.