

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Council,

I am writing in strong support of the proposed Special Appropriation of \$250,000 to the FY26 Operating Budget for the Department of Health and Human Services' Respite Care Program. For our family, respite care has truly been a godsend, and this funding is critical to our ability, as well as that of countless other families, to continue providing safe and loving care for our loved ones.

When our son was first diagnosed with autism, our family felt overwhelmed and isolated. We wanted to support him in the best way possible, but we had limited guidance, scarce resources, and no meaningful respite from the constant demands of caregiving. Like many families, we felt as though we were navigating this journey alone.

Once we were accepted into the Respite Care Program, everything changed. The program gave us more than temporary relief; it gave us stability, hope, and access to resources we never knew existed. Having respite care allowed us to focus on our son's growth while also protecting our own well-being. As caregivers, being able to rest, recharge, and attend to our own mental and physical health has made us better parents and a stronger, more supportive family.

The positive impact has been undeniable. We have seen growth not only in our son, but in our entire family dynamic. We are better equipped to meet his needs, advocate for him, and plan for his future. Respite care has improved our quality of life and allowed us to remain engaged, healthy members of our community.

Cutting or reducing funding for this program would be detrimental not only to our family but to many families throughout Montgomery County who rely on respite care to survive and thrive. Without it, caregivers risk burnout, families lose critical support, and vulnerable individuals may ultimately face more costly and disruptive outcomes.

I respectfully urge the County Council to approve this Special Appropriation and continue investing in the Respite Care Program. This funding is not a luxury, it is a necessity for families like ours who depend on it to provide compassionate, sustainable care for our loved ones.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your continued commitment to supporting families and caregivers in our community.

Sincerely,

Rachel and Chris Moore