

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

CB3-2018

James D. Walsh

January 16, 2018

The proposed increase of pay of County Council member salaries to \$80,000 (from the current inflation-indexed level of \$64,560) is excessive. I believe the proper level of compensation would be to simply continue the current compensation level indexed for inflation.

In addition to Council members' salary, it should also be acknowledged that Council members receive the same benefits, such as health care and retirement plan, as all full-time County employees, as well as a \$150 per month smart phone allowance. If those additional benefits are considered, the total compensation package proposed could be \$100,000 or more.

I recognize that County Council members sometimes put in numerous hours in their service. That may be the case during the adoption of the annual budget or in response to a natural disaster such as the Ellicott City flood, but hopefully those excessive time demands are the exception rather than the rule. Frankly, that comes with the territory. I think the County is better served by having part-time citizen legislators who can bring a variety of experiences to the table rather than expanding Council to a full-time position.

I have not heard a single candidate for Council declare that they are seeking to be elected because they could use the money. I truly believe that, notwithstanding political differences of opinion, everyone who seeks the position does so out of genuine concern for the good of the County and hopes to perform a civic service. Howard County does not seem to lack for citizens who seek to serve on County Council. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.