



FY 2023 Capital Budget: Funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects

Position: Support

Dear Howard County Council,

We are writing in strong support of the \$8+ million in funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects included in County Executive Calvin Ball's proposed FY 2023 capital budget. As organizations committed to the county's complete streets vision and improving the public health of all of our residents, we urge you to protect this funding in the final budget.

Howard County has certainly made great progress in implementing bike and pedestrian infrastructure projects and complete streets in recent years - and this funding represents a record, historic investment in these types of projects. In addition, the County's recent adoption of our new design manual will guide future planning and development to ensure that all users of the road - including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and individuals with mobility challenges - will be incorporated into every aspect of street and bridge design. We must continue to make progress in our biking and walking infrastructure to build and improve sidewalks, bike lanes, paths, crosswalks and more so everyone in our community has opportunities to bike, walk and access important services.

These projects are incredibly popular in our community. In fact, a recent poll found that 74% of Howard County likely voters support spending at least \$10 million on these improvements to our infrastructure, with 54% strongly supporting. With better, safer and more accessible roads, intersections, sidewalks and paths, we can improve opportunities for everyone in our community to be active and healthy.

Our goal is for everyone in Howard County, no matter who they are or where they live, to feel like they can safely, easily and comfortably bike, walk or take public transportation anywhere they need to go. With this historic funding, we are getting closer and closer to achieving that goal.

We urge you to protect this funding in the final FY 2023 capital budget and help us continue to make progress on implementing complete streets across Howard County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Heart Association

Association of Community Services of Howard County

Bicycling Advocates of Howard County

Columbia Town Center Residential Community Association, Inc.

Central Maryland Transportation Alliance

Community Ecology Institute

Gilchrist

Harper's Choice Community Association, Inc.

Hickory Ridge Community Association

Horizon Foundation

Howard County Association of REALTORS

Howard County Autism Society

Howard County Conservancy

Long Reach Community Association

Luminus Network

People Acting Together in Howard (PATH)



**American
Heart
Association.**

May 9th, 2022

Testimony of Laura Hale

American Heart Association

FY 2023 Budget: Funding for maternity care, complete streets

Position: Support

My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association urges the County Council to protect the proposed \$1.3M in FY23 budget to support the creation of a Maternity Partnership Program.

An area of deep concern for the American Heart Association is the need for maternity care for uninsured and low-income women in Howard County. As was noted in the American Heart Association's flagship journal *Circulation*: "Regardless of a woman's employment, housing, race or social status, she deserves a health system that ensures a healthy pregnancy, delivery and beyond childbirth as a healthy mom," said Garima Sharma, M.D., vice-chair of the policy statement writing group and director of the cardio-obstetrics program at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. Key investments are needed to make this goal a reality in Howard County. This cannot happen without access to maternity and postpartum care close to home.

The numbers in Howard County speak for themselves, in 2019, Black mothers living in Howard County were 63% more likely to have an infant born premature and 54% more likely to have an infant with low birth weight than white mothers – key factors that contribute to infant death.ⁱ In the same year, almost 12% of Hispanic mothers and 8% of Black mothers in the county received late or no prenatal care – in the case of Hispanic mothers, that's more than four times the percentage of white mothers.ⁱⁱ The need for access to maternity care and postpartum support is essential for the long term health of mothers.

- We urge the County Council to protect the proposed \$1.3M in FY23 budget to support the creation of a Maternity Partnership Program.

The American Heart Association urges these key investments to continue to build a healthier Howard County. Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ Maryland Vital Records, 2019.

ⁱⁱ Maryland Vital Records, 2019.

Sayers, Margery

From: Mariah Robertson <mdreis@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 6:32 AM
To: Budget Testimony; CouncilMail; Hira, Safa
Subject: Support for CEI

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Executive Ball, County Council Members, and County Leadership,

My name is Mariah Robertson and I live in the Hickory Ridge Village, and am providing testimony in support of the Community Ecology Institute (CEI) for robust inclusion in the county's operating budget. My relationship with CEI as a volunteer specifically in assisting with imagining ways for CEI to continue to be inclusive across the age span. As a geriatrician who serves the Howard County region I have spent time working with CEI on grant efforts focused on older adults. As you know, CEI is a unique local success story and making rapid strides towards fulfilling its mission to cultivate communities where people and nature thrive together by working towards tangible, community-level change at the many intersections of environment, education, equity and health.

Unlike any other Howard County organization/institution, CEI is truly intergenerational and focused on educating and connecting humans around the importance of appreciating the native lands upon which we live, understanding the history of the Freetown farm and developing solutions for a more environmentally sustainable community and world. They see the very real and concerning future we have ahead of us if we don't connect with the earth to make change. A very real part of this change is on the local level, connecting with other humans. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, they have created a safe community space to connect with nature and make a change. They were the first organization I chose to get involved with when I moved to Columbia because of this.

CEI's work in the community is unique and in direct alignment with the county's priorities of having thriving and healthy residents and a clean and sustainable environment. I respectfully request that the county continues to support CEI in the 2023 operational budget at the requested funding level.

Thank you so much for your support, please reach out with any questions you may have.

Mariah Robertson, MD, MPH

Sayers, Margery

From: bombick@verizon.net
Sent: Saturday, May 7, 2022 6:51 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: FY23 Budget

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear County Council,

Linked please find the [Local Finances in Government for Maryland Report, FY2020](#). Page 232 of the PDF (p. 225 of the document) begins a comparison of 5 years of county revenues and spending across counties, while earlier portions enumerate the percentage of spending by county in 2020. In comparing the 2020 expenditures, I am providing the following data points for comparison:

Expenditures by Function for Year Ending June 30, 2020 as a Percent of Total Revenues

	General Gov.	Public Safety	Public Works	Health/Social Services	Transportation	Primary/Secondary Ed.	Community Colleges	Parks & Rec	Libraries	Natural Resources	Community Dev. & Housing	Economic Opportunity	% Poverty Calculated 2019
Mo.Co.	7.8%	9.0%	6.5%	4.6%	5.6%	42%	4.5%	2.7%	0.8%	0.2%	4.3%	0.1%	7.3%
Baltimore	3.8%	10.2%	12.1%	2.9%	2.1%	45.6%	5.5%	0.7%	1.0%	0.4%	2.0%	1.0%	8.9%
Anne Arundel	4.7%	12.3%	6.9%	3.5%	4.8%	49.3%	4.9%	2.2%	1.0%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	5.8%
Howard	7.2%	11.8%	5.9%	3.3%	4.8%	47.8%	5.4%	2.6%	1.1%	0.1%	2.6%	0.1%	5.0%
Frederick	4.5%	10.5%	5.4%	4.5%	4.0%	53.3%	4.7%	2.0%	1.2%	1.4%	0.6%	1.2%	5.7%
Carroll	7.2%	8.2%	3.2%	3.4%	4.3%	54.6%	5.2%	1.1%	2.6%	2.2%	1.3%	0.9%	5.1%

Additionally, the following census data suggests that Howard County includes a larger than average percentage of residents under the age of 18 and a growing number of residents per household:

Household Population by Jurisdiction

	2020 Total Population	2020 GQ Population	2020 Household Population	Occupied Housing Units	2020 Average Household Size	2010 Average Household Size
Maryland	6,177,224	125,505	6,051,719	2,321,208	2.61	2.61
Montgomery	1,062,061	8,918	1,053,143	386,931	2.72	2.70
Baltimore	854, 535	22,328	832,207	329,964	2.52	2.48
Anne Arundel	588,261	9,659	578,602	219,971	2.63	2.63
Howard	332,317	3,077	329,240	118,781	2.77	2.72
Frederick	271,717	5,941	266,523	98,358	2.71	2.70
Carroll	172,891	3,728	169,163	63,050	2.68	2.74

Population Estimates by Age

	Montgomery	Baltimore	AA	Howard	Frederick	Carroll	Maryland
Population, 2020	1,062,061	854,535	588,261	332,317	271,717	167,134	6,177,224
Persons Under 5	6.1%	5.5%	6.1%	5.9%	5.9%	5.1%	6.0%
Persons under 18	23.1%	21.6%	22.3%	24.2%	23.1%	21.6%	22.1%
Persons 19-64	60.8%	60.8%	62.7%	61.5%	62.1%	61.1%	62%
Persons 65 and over	16.1%	17.6%	15.0%	14.3%	14.8%	17.3%	15.9%

[Census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

In researching the history of the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act*, I listened to an interesting meeting of legislatures and county executives discussing how to finance the program at the county level. As you know, the state funding is weighted so that money goes to counties based on relative wealth. When asked how wealthier counties were expected to fund Blueprint, the response was that their local governmental needs are less intense, allowing these counties to contribute a greater percentage of funding to education. I'm not sure if this is a reasonable recommendation, but it is, nevertheless, the equity lens through which the legislation and financing plan was created.

As a relatively wealthy county, with a high population of under-18 year olds and a growing number of residents per household, Howard County has some unique budgeting challenges to consider as it strives to implement the requirements of the *Blueprint* legislation. As you review the HCPSS budget, please consider the requested additional funding for the Special Education and Behavioral Support Staff positions. In prioritizing this critical area of need in the school system, the county council has an opportunity to make significant improvements for staff and students.

I look forward to listening to the budget work session discussions over the next few weeks. Please prioritize legally mandated services and environmental needs of the county before considering expansions of other amenities and services. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
Cate Bombick

Sayers, Margery

From: Gizala Ali <gizala01@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 6, 2022 10:20 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Purchase of Camp Ilchester

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Hello Honorable Council Members,

My name is Gizala Ali and I am a Howard County resident at 5648 Thunder Hill Rd, Columbia. I am writing to you to strongly encourage you to vote in support of the Howard County purchase of Camp Ilchester. I am the proud parent of a Girl Scout and we have certainly availed of the resources at Camp Ilchester over the years. While my daughter, I and our troop would prefer that GSCM have kept the camp as a continued venue for the girls I am hopeful that the county purchase will keep the greenspace use as it was originally intended and now open it up to the larger community to enjoy the space.

Thank you,
Gizala

RICHARD DEAN FLINN

9815 Snow Bird Lane | Laurel, Maryland 20723 | flinnrichard@verizon.net | 410-303-4884

May 3, 2022

Dear Council Members,

I am a long time Howard County resident and serve on the Board of Directors as President of Emerson Community Association. I am writing as a private citizen to express appreciation and respect for the proposed Operating budget's support of the Community Ecology Institute (CEI), an organization that has made a real difference in the Emerson community and is an organization well respected by my neighbors, our Members.

Through the influence of CEI, we have seen Emerson neighbors become far more invested in the health of our shared green spaces. Residents have successfully advocated for our Community Association's Board of Directors and Membership to adopt many new projects and practices that have enhanced our environmental stewardship and our quality of life. For example, we have installed native plant pollinator gardens in our parks; contracted with Howard EcoWorks for forest restoration projects and storm-drain stenciling; prioritized and added native trees to our landscaping; converted patches of turfgrass to wildflower meadow; and convinced our contracted landscape company, Brightview, to have several their staff pursue certification as Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals. Last month we even hosted our first "Green Expo," bringing environmental groups to tables at an outdoor event that educated and engaged our neighbors.

As a result of these and many other efforts, Emerson Community Association was recognized this year with a Howard County Green Leadership Award. We were also recognized with a national 2021 Green Community Award from the Associa Corporation.

I want you to know that the Community Ecology Institute is having a significant positive impact in the wider community. Teens in our neighborhood have participated in CEI internships and the elementary school in our neighborhood is partnering with CEI's Nourishing Gardens program.

I strongly urge you to protect and maintain robust support for the Community Ecology Institute, whose ripple effects are many.

Thank you.

Richard Flinn



West Friendship Vol Fire Dept
12535 Old Frederick Road
Sykesville, MD 21784
410-313-5403

I am Mickey Day and reside at 1940 Mt View Road in Marriottsville, MD. I currently serve as the Chief of the West Friendship Volunteer Fire Department and President of the Howard County Volunteer Firefighters Association. We are appreciative of the Executive recognizing the volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel by including this grant in the budget. Like everyone else, the past two years have been difficult on our volunteers, their families, and the departments that they represent. After being double vaccinated and boosted, I personally tested positive for the virus this past week. This is the reason I am not standing in front of you and have resorted to sending this correspondence. During the pandemic, our volunteers have continued to respond to the station for emergencies and other supportive functions. We continued to work along side the hard-working members of the Howard County Fire and Rescue Service to answer the needs of the citizens and visitors of Howard County.

This grant will help to lessen the gap of lost revenue that was realized by the lack of fundraising activities the past two years. It will be used to continue to support the funding of volunteered owned apparatus and for other support functions. As we all climb out of this pandemic together, it is comforting to know that the administration recognizes the commitment we make every day. Please stay safe and well. I thank you for our time.

Mickey Day



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Chiara D'Amore, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

The Community Ecology Institute to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding the FY23 operating budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Chiara D'Amore

Signature: _____

Date: 5/6/2022

Organization: The Community Ecology Institute

Organization Address: 8000 Harriet Tubman Lane, Columbia, MD 21044

8000 Harriet Tubman Lane, Columbia, MD 21044

Number of Members: 1000

Name of Chair/President: Jean Silver-Isenstadt

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing.

Sayers, Margery

From: Chiara D'Amore <cdamore@cei.earth>
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 3:36 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Jean Silver-Isenstadt
Subject: The Community Ecology Institute's operational budget testimony and supplemental information
Attachments: COMECO.TX 2020 PUBLIC INSPECTION.pdf; HoCoBudetTestimony_5-9-22_final.docx; Community Letter of Support_CEI_5-9-22.pdf

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council Members,

Thank you for your work in support of Howard County, especially during this busy budget season. Members of the Community Ecology Institute's leadership watched last week's operational budget work session and saw that there were two questions related to budget items associated with our 501c3 non-profit organization. To be responsive to these inquiries, we wanted to provide the following information in advance of tonight's budget hearing:

1. Council Member Yungmann made a general inquiry about whether the county receives financial statements for organizations that it supports. Attached please find CEI's 2020 tax documentation. Our 2021 taxes are being prepared now and will be publicly available once they are completed.
2. Council Member Jung asked about the property that CEI is exploring purchasing for community preservation with the state and county's support. The property under discussion is the "Green Farmacy Garden" located at 8210 Murphy Road, in Fulton (District 5). This unique six-acre property includes botanical gardens curated from around the world by the property's prior owners, the late James and Peggy Duke, who had transferred their property to the Maryland University of Integrated Health (MUIH, District 4). Jim Duke was a world-renowned ethnobotanist who had worked for the US Department of Agriculture and National Cancer Institute, traveling the globe to source, study, and catalogue plants with potential health benefits. Peggy Duke was a botanical illustrator who worked for the Smithsonian Institution. In January MUIH announced that they were looking to sell the Garden. Many people in the community then began reaching out to CEI to encourage our protection of the property, given our mission alignment and our positive experience transforming what is now known as Freetown Farm into a community asset. MUIH had numerous private sector buyers interested in potentially developing this property, but they have decided that they would like CEI to become the new stewards of this quiet gem in Howard County to value the property's teaching gardens and our commitment to preserving them. The Green Farmacy Garden is an ecological sanctuary, part of the United Plant Savers network of sanctuaries around the country, which strive to educate the public and maintain native plant species that have become at risk or endangered.

3.

We look forward to providing our testimony this evening. We have attached the testimony to this email as well as a letter of support from the community with over 150 signatures.

Sincerely,

Chiara D'Amore

[Chiara D'Amore](#), Ph.D.

Executive Director

[The Community Ecology Institute](#)

*Please note, I work for CEI in a part time capacity and am often in the field. Non-urgent emails may take several business days for a response. If your need is urgent please contact me at 443-832-3824.

CEI humbly acknowledges the Indigenous people immemorial who were wrongfully removed from their ancestral lands where we live and work today. We offer our deepest respect to the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, and all other tribes Indigenous to the central Maryland region where our organization is based. To learn more about the Indigenous people where you live, visit [Native-Land.ca](#).



Community Ecology Institute

May 9, 2022

Good evening,

My name is Chiara D'Amore and I am the founder and Executive Director of the Community Ecology Institute (CEI). CEI was established as a 501c3 nonprofit organization in 2016. Our mission is to cultivate communities where people and nature thrive together. CEI's programs foster tangible, community-level change at the intersections of environment, education, equity and health.

With support from the County and the community, in 2019 CEI was able to purchase the last working farm in Columbia and protect it from housing development and subdivision. This enabled us to create Freetown Farm, a 6.4-acre experiential education center where people learn from hands-on experience how to lead happier, healthier, more connected and sustainable lives. CEI has shaped Freetown Farm into a unique and vibrant place of common ground for our diverse community. There, our programs have grown along with our produce. In 2021, more than 1,500 community members engaged with CEI at Freetown Farm.

We are very grateful for the inclusion of resources for CEI in the county's FY23 operating budget. These funds will help support our operations at Freetown and will enable us to have the opportunity to protect another unique, 6-acre parcel of land from housing development and subdivision. The "Green Farmacy Garden" located at 8210 Murphy Road, in Fulton is a unique six-acre property that includes botanical gardens curated from around the world by the property's prior owners, the late James and Peggy Duke, who had transferred their property to the Maryland University of Integrated Health. Jim Duke was a world-renowned ethnobotanist who had worked for the US Department of Agriculture and National Cancer Institute, traveling the globe to source, study, and catalogue plants with potential health benefits. Peggy Duke was a botanical illustrator who worked for the Smithsonian Institution. In January MUIH announced that they were looking to sell the Garden. Many people in the community then began reaching out to CEI to encourage our protection of the property, given our mission alignment and our positive experience transforming what is now known as Freetown Farm into a community asset. MUIH had numerous private sector buyers interested in potentially developing this property, but they have decided that they would like CEI to become the new stewards of this quiet gem in Howard County to value the property's teaching gardens and our commitment to preserving them. The Green Farmacy Garden is part of the United Plant Savers network of sanctuaries around the country, which strive to educate the public and maintain native plant species that have become at risk or endangered.

CEI reacquaints people with the ecosystems of which we are a part, deepening appreciation for healthy farms, forests, watersheds, and biodiversity—all while fostering climate resilience and building social connection. For example, regarding food growing:



Community Ecology Institute

- We offer garden-based education programs for people across the life-span, from adults with babies on their backs, to students, and people in their 80s and 90s.
 - Our Roots & Wings Learning Community provides elementary and middle school aged students with education literally rooted in the large Youth Garden at Freetown Farm.
 - Our Community Blooms Internship Program supports high school and college students with in-depth exploration of their interest related to ecological and agricultural themes.
 - Our Nourishing Gardens program, which won the 2021 Changemaker Challenge Community Choice Award, is creating a work force trained to transform lawns into ecologically beneficial food growing gardens planted where people live, learn, work and play.
- We are partnered with the Howard County Public School System, Howard Community College, the Howard County Branch of the NAACP, HopeWorks, The Third, VolunTeens, Equity4HC, scouts, area universities, and numerous other organizations in unique education opportunities that have an emphasis on growing healthy food.
- We have grown tens of thousands of pounds of produce for the community, donating much of it to Columbia Community Cares and the Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center and also selling to the county's Roving Radish Program. This food has been grown using regenerative agricultural practices and with the helping hands of people who are now more empowered to grow food for their own well-being and that of our community.

Across programs, we are stewarding Freetown Farm to demonstrate nature-based actions that support the County's commitment to the US Climate Alliance's Natural and Working Lands Challenge. We have more than a dozen different demonstration areas of nature-based actions already installed and more on the horizon. For example,

- We have implemented substantial best practices that demonstrate effective stormwater management and are working with community partners to resolve flooding challenges at their places of origin. Our innovative Walkable Watershed plan for the community surrounding Freetown Farm is aligned with the County's complete streets initiative as well as the walk HoCo and bike HoCo plans.
- The transformation of Freetown's existing barn into our community engagement center this year will showcase deep green building practices, such as using 66% less energy than if we were renovating it to current code.
- We are working to install ground-mounted solar in our Climate Victory Garden and roof-mounted solar on our forthcoming community engagement center, with the goal of having our operations at Freetown Farm be carbon neutral by 2024.

In short, CEI demonstrates how local, nature-based experiential education centers can provide physical and mental health benefits while developing knowledge and skills that



Community Ecology Institute

support personal, family, community, and ecosystem resilience. Like the county, we are tackling the effects of climate change by planting trees, supporting local food systems, nurturing pollinators, improving local water quality, conserving energy, and harvesting clean and renewable electricity to do our part to protect the future. Through all of our efforts to implement science-based best practices, we help people feel inspired and empowered to take similar actions at their homes and in their neighborhoods.

CEI's current and emerging work directly aligns with the County's priorities of having thriving and healthy residents and a clean and sustainable environment. I respectfully request that the County continues to support CEI in the 2023 operational budget at the proposed funding levels. Since the budget process began you have received dozens of letters of support for CEI from community members and with this testimony we have submitted a letter of support signed by more than 150 community members. We hope that our collective voices convey the value of continuing to invest in CEI's unique role in Howard County.

Thank you very much.

May 9, 2022

Dear Howard County Executive Ball, County Council Members, and County Leadership,

Thank you for including robust support of the Community Ecology Institute (CEI) in the County's 2023 operating budget. CEI is a wonderful local success story that has touched the lives of so many people in a very short period of time. From CEI's innovative programs (a Community of Families in Nature, the Roots & Wings Learning Community, the Community Blooms Internship, and Nourishing Gardens), to the dozens of organizations with roots at Freetown Farm (the NAACP, HopeWorks, The Third, Bike HoCo and more), to the more than a thousand people who have found connection and inspiration as volunteers and participants, CEI meaningfully nurtures people and partnerships while protecting and celebrating our local ecosystem.

CEI's mission to cultivate communities where people and nature thrive together is in direct alignment with the County's priorities for healthy residents and a clean, sustainable environment. By working towards tangible, community-level change at the intersections of environment, education, equity, and health, CEI will continue to help the County innovate and lead in these essential spaces. With real appreciation for CEI's collaborative good works and positive impact in our community, I respectfully request that the support included for the Community Ecology Institute in the 2023 operational budget be kept intact.

Thank you,

Rebecca Beall
Chris Roscoe
Teri Saunier
Melissa Harton
Diana Allos
Jameelah Destry
Kim Flyr
John Gonnella
Deborah Lavine
Michael (Bhodi) Tims
Valerie Stanford
Helen Lowe Metzman
Carl Latkin
Ernest Hilsenrath
Jeannine Burns
Sara Smith
Rian Hart
Carolyn Parsa
Joyce Brager
Kerri Isenstadt
Zaneta Trent
Ezra Silver-Isenstadt

Madelyn Bloom
Sophie Silver-Isenstadt
Lisbeth Jorgensen
Erika Chavarria
Evelyn Mogren
Elizabeth Goldsmith
Julia A McCready
Brian England
Deeba Jafri
Michael Calvert
Marlene Riley
Jason Van Kirk
Lisa Crabtree, PhD
Alan Black
Maryanne Joy Woelfer
Patricia Fanning
Michael Gonzales
Gary Pilarchik
Drew Brown
Anne Berkowitz
Stephanie Wang
Kim Pezza Drake
Joseph Brager
Deborah Slawson
Mary Ann Barry
Gary Krause
Janssen E. Evelyn
Heather D'Amore
Robert A Hurwitz
Edwin Gould
Georgia Eacker
Margo Duesterhaus
Dana Belanger
Kellyn Mahan
Esha Dhora
Amy Simon
Linda H. Schiffer
Becca Niburg
Loni Cohen
Grace Yi
David C Weeks
Alice Wilkerson
Michael Hindle
Kathleen Kujawa
Beer, Carri
Shyla Cogar
Katherine Flanagan

Marny Helfrich
Daniel Nail
Jim Favret
Terry R Matthews
Carson Ward
Mike Kapusta
Elisabeth Ceysens
Allison Korn
Amy D. Boehmer
Joi Howard
Kyle Reis
Caela Barry
Emily Souder
Liz Feighner
Mae Beale
Thomas Armes
Kim Delmar
Alexandra Cohen
Nathan Zhang
Aisha Applewhite
Brian Bohlayer
Melissa van Fleet
Christine Horn
Claudia Lafuse
Mindy Golden
Phyllis A Yigdall
James Handley
Christina Abbasi
Richard Wayne Gates
Meghan Patricia Cole
Denise Mitten
Ari Silver-Isenstadt
Julie Dunlap
Adiyah Ali
Sandra Price
Shirley H. Harden
Laura Bacon
Sophie Allan
Stuart Silver
Maya Silver-Isenstadt
Ximing Luo
Jessica Masciantonio
Charlie Goedeke
Ann Faust
Patrick Curtis
Theresa E. Taylor
Trevor Silbert

Mary Hepple
Connie Dvorak
Alvin Findlay
Christy Ferguson
Jean Silver-Isenstadt
Elizabeth Gilbert
Jason Zhao
Angela Nichols
Tonya Aikens
Lawrence Walker II
Priscilla Knapp
Erica Jones
Muthoni Michuki
Tameka Walker
Lisa Otero
Sarah Thober
Rebecca Bryant
Anne Gonnella
B. Burke-Hicks
Paula Bernal
Hui Men
Lindsay Kreisher
Lisa Otero
Christine Altom
Laura Kelsey
Jessica MacCartee
Chelsea Clark
Colleen Vernon
Heather Quick
Megan McCloud
Christina Ryder
Stephen Pantano
A Underwood
Katherine Grastorf
Sarah Baumert
Caitlin Roscoe
Praveen Teegula
Carrie Hemington
Mary Trumbauer
Kristen Browne



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Wm. Wade Sapp, Jr., have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)
the Rockburn Land Trust's Executive Committee to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)
County Council regarding purchased conservation easements to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)
support for/ opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Wm. Wade Sapp, Jr.

Signature: *Wm. Wade Sapp, Jr.*

Date: 09 May 2022

Organization: Rockburn Land Trust

Organization Address: 6560 Belmont Woods Road, Elkridger, MD 21075

Number of Members: 75 dues-paying members

Name of Chair/President: Wm. Wade Sapp, Jr.

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing

ROCKBURN LAND TRUST

Testimony in support of using County operating funds to purchase conservation easements

09 May 2022

Good evening chairperson Jones and County Council members.

I am Wade Sapp, President of the Rockburn Land Trust, and I am testifying on behalf of that organization. The Executive Committee has approved this testimony. We established the Rockburn Land Trust (RLT) in 1989, one of Maryland's earliest, and we have approximately 75 dues-paying members. Our mission is the preservation, protection, and balanced use of natural resources in the Patapsco valley watershed. This includes establishing and holding perpetual conservation easements, some in coordination with the Maryland Environmental Trust. Through these easements, we are protecting 218 acres composed of 26 parcels.

The County Executive is considering a pilot program to preserve additional greenspace by working with non- profits that might otherwise be ineligible for existing conservation programs. The Rockburn Land Trust strongly supports this opportunity to purchase conservation easements that would expand on years of resident efforts. Program benefits:

- **Balance** - County protected greenspaces showcase Howard County as a leader in balancing density and green space.
- **Global warming** - Preservation parcels frequently have existing tree cover or have a forest plan as a required component of the easement. Additional benefits are storm water mitigation and wetlands protection.
- **Experience crafting easements** - The RLT has 30 years experience in establishing and monitoring easements that both protect the environment and permit ongoing use by residents. We will be supporting the Conservancy which we expect to take a lead in this effort. Easements are effective and beneficial.
- **Juxtaposing easements** - Locating parcels adjacent to other preservation parcels, in particular county and state park lands, potentiates benefits.
- **Not-for-profit organizations** - Lastly and importantly, non-profits do not benefit from income tax deductions and reduced property taxes that are available to individuals and for-profit organizations who donate preservation easements. This proposed program will help non-profits preserve land while still retaining ownership and still using the land for the non-profit purposes.

For these reasons we commend the County Executive and urge the County Council to support this program. Thank you.



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Nikki H. Vernick, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Horizon Foundation to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding 2023 Operating Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Nikki H. Vernick

Signature: Nikki H. Vernick

Date: 5/8/2022

Organization: Horizon Foundation

Organization Address: 10221 Wincepin Circle Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21044

Number of Members: 18 board members

Name of Chair/President: Nikki H. Vernick

**This form can be submitted electronically via email to
councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the
Public Hearing.**



May 9, 2022

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Gopi Suri

David Wolf

BODY: Howard County Council
BILL: FY 2023 Operating Budget
RE: Funding for Maternity Partnership
POSITION: Support

The Horizon Foundation is Howard County's community health foundation and the largest independent health philanthropy in the state of Maryland. We lead community change so everyone in Howard County can live a longer, better life.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only underscored the need for robust funding for public health, but it also exposed significant, long-standing health inequities that leave many in our community behind. One area where this problem is most stark is in the lack of prenatal care and wrap-around services for uninsured and underinsured women in Howard County, which has resulted in persistent infant health disparities. We urge the County Council to protect the \$1.3 million proposed by County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball to launch a Maternity Partnership Program. This program will ensure that pregnant women in our county receive the care and support they need to deliver healthy babies and to stay healthy themselves.

Howard County prides itself on being one of the healthiest communities in the country, and yet we have exactly zero maternity clinics who will see ALL women within our county borders. As a result, many uninsured pregnant women seeking care have to travel outside of Howard County in order to get basic prenatal services. This is not just inconvenient – it can be impossible for many women who do not have access to transportation or lack the economic means to take time away from their jobs and families to travel long distances to these crucial medical appointments. Far too often, women do not get the maternity care they need until very late in their pregnancy, or sometimes not at all.

The creation of this maternity partnership program will also better position Howard County to address the persistent inequities in pre-term births and low birth weight outcomes. By providing enhanced prenatal care services paired with other supports such as care coordination, patient navigation, doula services, and housing and transportation supports among other interventions, Howard County will provide the needed healthy start for both mom and baby.

Howard County Council Budget Testimony
Support for Maternity Partnership Funding

According to 2019 Maryland Vital Records, Black mothers living in Howard County were 63% more likely to have an infant born premature and 54% more likely to have an infant with low birth weight than white mothers – key factors that contribute to infant death. In the same year, almost 12% of Hispanic mothers and 8% of Black mothers in the county received late or no prenatal care – in the case of Hispanic mothers, that’s more than four times the percentage of white mothers. Instead of giving our children the foundation necessary to live long, healthy and vibrant lives, we have put obstacles in front of them – even before they are born.

Providing quality prenatal care and wrap-around support services for uninsured and underinsured women is highly popular. In a recent poll conducted by Lake Research Partners, 69% of Howard County likely voters think “providing better access to maternity and post-birth care for uninsured and underinsured pregnant women,” is important, including 28% who say it is extremely important. And overall support is significant in all five county council districts. See https://www.thehorizonfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/LRP-Memo-on-Howard-County-Survey-Results_FINAL.pdf for more info.

We urge you to protect the \$1.3 million proposed in the FY 2023 operating budget that will provide enhanced prenatal care and needed supports to ensure that ALL women in Howard County can have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.

Thank you for your consideration.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

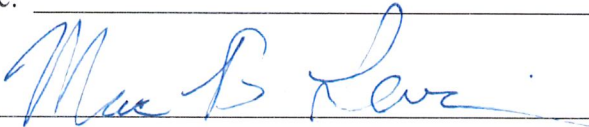
I, Marc Levin, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Maryland University of Integrative Health to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding county budget bill to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Marc Levin

Signature: 

Date: 5/7/22

Organization: Maryland University of Integrative Health

Organization Address: Laurel, MD 20723

Laurel, MD 20723

Number of Members: _____

Name of Chair/President: Marc Levin

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing.

Testimony of Maryland University of Integrative Health

Marc Levin, President

Support of Proposed Funding for Maryland University of Integrative Health in the County Budget

May 9, 2022

I am Marc Levin, president of Maryland University of Integrative Health (MUIH). MUIH is a 501(c)(3) private university and is a national leader in integrative health and wellness. We are one of the few universities in the US dedicated solely to the promotion of whole-person and community health and wellness and have the broadest array of integrative health and wellness programs of any university in the country. We were founded in 1974 with an acupuncture clinic in downtown Columbia and have expanded into a broad based university.

The proposed county budget includes funding for MUIH toward the building of a community focused Whole-Person Health and Wellness Center which will provide expanded integrative health services and education to residents of Howard County as well as other benefits to the county. Our goal is to develop a nationally recognized successful community-oriented facility that ultimately serves as a model for others to replicate across the country.

The new community focused Whole-Person Health and Wellness Center will include a teaching kitchen, a comprehensive integrated health care clinic that will include a specialized integrative pain management program, a therapeutic yoga studio, and a classroom. It will be the first center in the country to include all these aspects.

- **The Teaching Kitchen** will be a place for adults and children of all ages to learn about the impact of mindful nutrition and diet on their long-term health, daily physical comfort, and mental well-being. The teaching kitchen will be used extensively for community classes and education and will be a very popular and valuable resource for the residents of the county. In addition to general community classes, we envision a partnership with the Health Department, the Department of Community Resources and Services,

the Office on Aging and Independence, and the public school system for educating individuals, families, and students on nutrition and cooking. Some examples of classes that can be taught by our experts include: food as medicine; cooking whole foods on a budget; fast and easy cooking for seniors; cooking with our children; nutrition for pregnancy; cooking for diabetes; family cooking; anti-inflammatory meals; and mindful eating.

- **The comprehensive integrative health care clinic** will provide a robust suite of health and wellness treatments and services by a diverse team of health care practitioners. These practitioners and staff would also provide community outreach and education sessions as well as collaborate with county departments on providing services to their clients. As part of the integrative clinic will be a **specialized Integrative Pain Management Program** comprised of a broad array of professionals who, as a team, can offer non-pharmacological and pharmacological approaches to pain management and well-being with an integrative and whole-person approach. This program will treat varieties of chronic pain and address addiction challenges that are associated with pain management.
- **A therapeutic yoga studio** will be used to make the healing practices of yoga therapy, mindfulness meditation, and targeted yoga practices part of their health and wellness practices.
- **A Classroom** will be used for free and discounted classes on health and wellness for the residents of the county providing the education and tools necessary for people to make healthy decisions in their daily lives.

The center and the practitioners in the center will also focus on providing services to underserved populations.

The proposed funding is an investment in the health and well-being of the residents of the county, a commitment to preventive and whole-person wellness, and will support the efforts of various county departments. We believe funding to support health and wellness, preventive approaches, nutrition education, and integrated care is just as important as funding hospitals. In fact, efforts to keep

individuals out of hospitals not only saves money but improves quality of life. MUIH has not previously received funding from the county.

Looking at this unique new center from a different lens, we believe it will attract individuals from across the region to come to Howard County to receive services or attend classes. It will also be an additional benefit for individuals considering moving to Howard County or locating a business in Howard County to know that this center and its broad array of health and wellness services are available close to them. It will also serve the county to be able to promote that it has not only a nationally recognized public school system, library, community college, and hospital system, but also a nationally recognized an innovative Whole-Person Health and Wellness Center.

We urge you to support the funding for MUIH in the proposed budget.

Thank you for considering our comments and I can answer any questions you may have.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, COLGEN WEST, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

HOWARD COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.

(Please circle one.)

Printed Name:

COLGEN WEST

Signature:

Colgen West

Date:

5/5/22

Organization:

HOWARD COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL

Organization Address:

8510 HIGH RIDGE ROAD

ELLCOTT CITY, MD 21014

Number of Members:

325

Name of Chair/President:

ADAM STULL, BOARD PRESIDENT

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**HOWARD COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL
Testimony submitted to Howard County Council
Regarding FY2023 Proposed Budget
May 9, 2022**

Good evening Chairman Jones and members of the County Council. I am Coleen West, Executive Director of the Howard County Arts Council located at 8510 High Ridge Road. On behalf of the Arts Council, I want to recognize all that you do to support the citizens of Howard County and THANK YOU for your response and leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research shows, the nonprofit creative sector was the hardest hit sector in the US economy¹. A study on COVID's impact on the Economic Vitality of Maryland's arts sector covering the period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021 shows that the arts in Maryland had a total economic loss of 19.4 % or \$135 million dollars, audience spending was reduced by \$80 million or 96%, and total jobs lost was 30,000, a loss of 60%². And, this year, just as the arts community began re-opening venues, COVID – once again - threw a wrench in our season.

We are also concerned about the long-term effect of this crisis on the arts community, as the arts sector is historically the hardest hit and the last to recover from economic downturns and recessions.

I am here tonight to urge you to continue to invest in the arts and creative workers and to remind you that when it comes to our quality of life and growing the County's economy, the arts can be – and should be - part of the solution. To that end, I ask you to fully support County Executive Ball's proposed annual arts appropriation of \$1,194,600 -- 77% of this funding will support grants to 50-60 local and regional arts organizations and includes a first-time programming and operational grant to support the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission.

Recognizing the importance of the arts and creative worker on the State's quality of life and economy, the General Assembly passed record funding for the arts this year:

- \$28.8 million for the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) – a near \$2 million increase.
- \$50 million for the Arts and Tourism Relief Fund. \$40 million will be appropriated to the MSAC to distribute additional grants for arts organizations and independent artists adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The other \$10 million will be invested in local tourism agencies providing much-needed marketing tools for the creative sector.
- And, \$5 million to establish the nation's first public network of makerspaces.
- All of this, is addition to the Arts Capital Grant Program passed last year which will provide \$3 million in capital funds for small to mid-sized arts organizations (with budgets under \$3 million).

Pre-COVID (FY19), attendance at arts events funded through these grants was 284,000 and volunteers for local, county-based arts groups receiving grants donated 97,000 hours – a value of \$2.4 million – clear indicators that the arts are important to the citizens of Howard County.³

A strong arts sector improves our quality of life, but it is also an economic asset that stimulates business activity, attracts tourism revenue, and helps retain a high-quality work force. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector accounted for 4.2 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), or \$876.7 billion, and generates 4.6 million jobs.⁴

The arts contribute to Maryland's economy by creating jobs across multiple industries-- driving tourism and tourism dollars -- and providing a foundation for creativity and innovation that will help keep Maryland competitive in the global market. And, Howard County companies will have to compete with its neighbors to attract the creative workforce of artists, entrepreneurs and innovators they need to be competitive.

However, a study published by the Conference Board (serving the Fortune 1000 U.S. companies), found 97% of employers say creativity and innovation skills are important in U.S. workplaces, while 85% of employers say they can't find the creative, innovative applicants they seek.⁵

To attract and retain these creative workers, adequate wages and affordable housing, studios, and makerspaces are needed and a strong network of arts, technology and other creative businesses - large and small – needs to be in place to employ them.

Howard County has positioned itself well to meet these expectations. We have a vision for a vibrant arts, retail and entertainment district in Downtown Columbia along with Merriweather Post Pavilion, the iconic Chrysalis amphitheater, and the proposed cultural center. We have a growing state-of-the-art community college, excellent recreational facilities and libraries, and the arts curriculum in our public schools is among the strongest in the nation. Ellicott City was named one of the "Top 20 Leading Creative Class Cities" by Richard Florida.⁶ And, pre-COVID, we were home to 763 arts-related businesses that employ 3,511 people in the County.⁷ The arts sector accounts for 3.9% of the total businesses in the County, 1.7% of the people they employ, and is made up of major tourist attractions, for-profit media and design businesses, and a vibrant network of non-profit arts groups.

Howard County is a special place that has developed a strong community for the arts. Pre-COVID, studies found Howard County:

- Had a higher number of arts and cultural organizations and artists than 91% of counties in the US;
- Raised more arts contributions and earned a higher level of program revenue than 96% of counties in the US⁶;
- residents spent more per capita on arts and entertainment than seven Baltimore-Washington metro counties.
- had the second highest level of arts participation per capita out than seven Baltimore-Washington metro counties⁸.

The arts (both for- and non-profit) are an important part of the County's small business sector. The heART of the arts community are the non-profit groups, which are also the primary focus of the Arts Council. Non-profits, such as the Columbia Festival of the Arts, HoCoPoLitSo, Rep Stage and others, provide opportunities for engagement and participation, they incubate artistic ideas and enterprises, and they create distinctive experiences that attract tourists, businesses and residents alike.

It takes a special ecosystem to maintain a vibrant arts community on a local level – you need the talent and dedication of practicing artists, strong arts organizations, innovative businesses, enthusiastic audiences, financial support and arts-friendly policies from government, and contributions from businesses and individuals. In addition, you need affordable space to incubate, create, and produce the arts and you need appropriate space to present the work and engage the public.

The non-profits work year-round to make the arts available to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. They do an incredible amount of work with very little resources. Even in good times, their budgets are extremely fragile. While they are used to operating on shoe-string budgets, after two years of closures and reduced capacity, they've suffered huge losses in ticket sales and a steep decline in earned and contributed income. Their already fragile budgets are at great risk.

It's hard to imagine what the arts sector will look like once we reach the end of this current crisis, however history shows us that the arts are one of the hardest sectors hit and the last to recover from economic downturns. For perspective, after the 2008 recession, it took the Arts Council 9 years to get our camp enrollment back to pre-recession numbers.

We are grateful for the relief funding received from County, State and Federal governments which have helped the arts community remain afloat. We are also grateful

for the \$40 million that Maryland's General Assembly appropriated to the Maryland State Arts Council for additional recovery grants to be distributed in FY23.

As we begin to reopen with limited audiences, the small to mid-sized organizations (which make up the bulk of Howard County arts organizations) cannot make up for lost revenue by increasing productivity and reducing overhead – they have minimal operating expenses as it is – cutting budgets further means closing doors for good.

I am here tonight, to ask you to support funding for this non-profit sector by approving the County Executive's proposed budget. County funding provides arts non-profits with a life-line – a baseline of unrestricted support that they use to underwrite their core activities and to leverage private dollars.

County investment in the arts serves the public interest by broadening public access to the arts and by preserving and fostering diverse forms of expression. In turn, the non-profit arts groups give back to our community by enhancing our quality of life and community wellness, celebrating artistic traditions, preserving cultural heritage, attracting new businesses and jobs, and generating revenue for the County. Pre-COVID-19 (FY19), Howard County grantees not only provided us with exceptional programming, they used county funds to leverage \$3.8 million in revenues – 33% from earned income and admissions, 22% Howard County, 10% individuals, 9% State and Federal, 6% corporations, 3% foundations, 3 % from the Columbia Association, 15% other– and generate 141 FTE jobs.⁹

Statewide (pre-COVID-19), 13,185 arts-related businesses generated 52,723 jobs¹⁰ in Maryland, including 258 non-profit arts groups that generated 16,900 FTE jobs. The non-profit sector alone had a total annual impact of \$1.3 billion.¹¹

The arts generate tourism dollars and - once we are back in business - will add to the recovery of our local economy. Based on past attendance, 20-30% of our non-profit arts audiences are made up of people who reside outside of Howard County,¹² these

visitors come to our County and spend money at local restaurants and businesses. The Maryland State Department of Commerce reports that every \$1 of operating generates an additional \$4.16 in spending on goods and services.¹³ Using this formula, the non-profit arts groups in Howard County, generated an extra \$15.7 million in secondary spending to our local economy in FY19 for a total economic impact of \$19.7 million (this does not include revenue from for-profit venues such as Merriweather Post Pavilion, Toby's Dinner Theatre, movie theaters, or design, marketing and printing companies, or others that do not receive direct funding from the Arts Council). An investment in the arts is an investment in our future.

Seventy-seven percent of the proposed county funding will go to support 4 grant programs that provide operating and project grants to 50-60 organizations and schools and first-time funding for the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission.

- 1) The Community Arts Development (CAD) program provides operating and project grants to local arts organizations as well as non-arts groups interested in presenting arts programs. In FY21, the Arts Council awarded \$374,315 (CAD: \$342,411, JRT:\$2820; OD:\$4017 CH:\$1000; Relief:24,067) to 22 Howard County organizations.
- 2) The Baltimore City Arts and Culture (BCAC) program awards grants to city organizations that have regional significance and provide considerable services to Howard County residents. In FY21, we awarded \$171,000 to 11 city organizations.
- 3) The Outreach Howard program awards grants to City grantees to produce projects IN Howard County. In FY21, \$50,770 was awarded to 7 organizations.
- 4) The Artist-in-Education (AiE) program, a partnership with the County PTAs, provides grants to place visiting artists in school classrooms to enhance student

experiences and skills and meet local and state goals for arts education. In FY21, we awarded \$37,733 to 6 schools and HCPSS Summer Arts Program.

- 5) First time funding to support the programs and operations of the Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission.

The CAD, BCAC, and AiE programs must be matched at least 1-to-1 by the grant recipient. The goals of the grant programs are:

- To foster excellence, diversity and vitality in arts offerings for Howard County residents.
- To broaden opportunities for Howard County audiences, artists, and arts organizations.
- To increase the availability of arts activities in Howard County. And,
- To increase awareness of arts.

All grantees are required to submit final reports, which the Arts Council uses to evaluate grant programs, to track attendance and budget figures, and to hold grantees accountable to their request. These reports show that community interest and support, in terms of participation, is very strong – 284,000 attended arts events sponsored, in part, through County funds and 97,000 volunteer hours, valued at \$2.4 million, were donated. We also provided opportunities for 9,600 artists through these grant programs (FY19/Pre-COVID-19).

The Arts Council also assisted the County in distributing \$100,000 in HoCo Rise Relief funds to 49 individual artists and arts groups.

In addition to the grant programs, the proposed budget provides funds to support the Arts Council's other principle program, the 32,000 square foot multi-purpose Howard County Center for the Arts in Ellicott City. At the Center, we sponsor year-round classes, art exhibits in our galleries, and performances in the community black box theatre. We also provide low-cost studios for 14 visual artists, office space for 3

resident arts groups, and meeting space for 6 volunteer run groups that participate in our Arts Advancement Program. Pre-COVID-19 (FY19), 38,725 people visited the Center and we provided opportunities for 4,190 artists students to showcase their work. Whether they take a class, view an exhibit, drop in a studio, or enjoy a performance in the black box theatre, the Center provides rewarding experiences in the arts for people of all ages and from all walks of life.

Funds we receive from the County also support county-wide initiatives, such as, our on-line arts calendar, ARTsites, a partnership with 12 sites throughout the County to place sculptures in public spaces for one year, as well as free community-based arts activities for underserved audiences, such as our Head StART in ART program.

Head StART in ART is a model artist-in-residence program for preschoolers from low-income families that has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Maryland State Arts Council as an exemplary early childhood arts program. This program introduces 100-150 children to practicing artists and provides them with experiences and training in the arts that would otherwise not take place. Each residency is designed to provide age-appropriate activities that complement Head Start's curriculum and reinforce core life and learning skills that are needed for future success. This program is free to participants. It received the John W. Holland Service Award from the Community Action Council in 2011. Cuts to the Arts Council budget would cause us to reduce or eliminate free public programs such as this and limit free public access to the arts.

Cuts would also adversely affect the groups that receive County funding through the Arts Council's grant programs. Local treasures, such as the Columbia Orchestra, the Columbia Festival of the Arts, and HoCoPoLitSo rely on these grants to meet their day-to-day operational needs. Unrestricted funds for general operations are rare, the Arts Council, through its grant from the County, is one of the only sources of such support. As mentioned earlier, the operations of the non-profit arts groups, both large and small,

are extremely fragile – any cuts to the arts budget will have a negative impact on our local arts groups, our community, and the people we serve.

In addition to the economic impact mentioned earlier, the arts impact our daily lives in other tangible ways. Numerous independent studies from the academic, arts, business, law enforcement, medical and technology fields confirm that the arts are an effective means to address a wide variety of issues and challenges in our community such as:

1) Workforce Development

Early encouragement and training in the arts help students develop core life and social skills that lead to future success, both academically and in the workplace. To quote educator, Paul Lehman, “A lot of what is taught in schools suggests that there are correct and incorrect answers – as evidenced by the use of multiple choice and true/false questions. In the real world, questions are not posed that way.” He goes on to say that the academic, business, and public sectors say today’s graduates are not prepared to keep our workforce competitive in the new global economy. This is supported by the Conference Board study cited earlier. In order to be competitive and address real-life circumstances, employers need people who can do more than check off an answer from a prepared list of options or people who have only been taught what is tested - they need people who are able to make independent, complex judgments and decisions. The arts, by their very nature, teach people to seek multiple interpretations and solutions, weigh options and think critically. They also teach us how to be more tolerant and open.

In order to attract and maintain a creative workforce, greater emphasis on arts education and practice is needed in our schools and communities.

2) Education

The contributions the arts make to academic success are well documented, I will take this opportunity to cite two important studies. First, a report from the College Board Profile of SAT and Achievement Test Takers, which has been

tracking tests for decades, shows that students who studied the arts or music for four or more years, on average, score 93 points better on their SAT scores than students with just one-half year of arts or music.¹⁴ Second, is a study from UCLA that followed a sample of 25,000 American high school students over a ten-year period. The results of this study show that students who studied the arts had higher grades, scored better on standardized tests, had lower dropout rates, and were more active in community affairs than other students. In addition, it found that students from disadvantaged families who studied the arts improved their overall school performance more rapidly than other students.¹⁵

While studying the arts, students hone their perceptual, analytic and interpretive skills while developing creative thinking, communication and problem-solving abilities – providing them with the critical skills needed to succeed in school and in life.

The arts also provide a common ground for understanding. They facilitate intercultural understanding and provide a common lexicon for building relationships in an increasingly diverse and global society. With the growing number of non-English speaking students enrolling in our public schools, it is important to maintain a strong arts curriculum, one that is integrated with other subjects, in order to connect with non-English speakers and bridge the cultural gap.

And, during this time of distanced learning, some of the most engaging – and successful – on-line content is being developed by art and music teachers.

3) Community Health and Wellness

The arts have a positive impact on community health and wellness. Nearly one-half of the nation's healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and staff; 78 percent deliver these programs because of their healing benefits to patients—shorter hospital stays, better pain management, and less

medication.¹⁶ Physicians and therapists use visual art, music, dance, and drama to treat patients with a variety of therapeutic needs. Here, the arts are used to strengthen speech patterns, self-image, and socialization skills; they help patients overcome or reduce physical dysfunction; and music therapy, in particular, has been very successful in treating seniors with Alzheimer's Disease. Military service members and Veterans rank art therapies in the top 4 (out of 40) interventions and treatments.¹⁷ The arts not only help patients cope with loss, isolation, depression, and the effects of mental and physical illnesses, but help families cope as well.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, people all over the world turned to the arts to connect with one another, add perspective to their lives, and help make sense of what was happening around them and others world-wide. Whether it was concerts on rooftops, performances on Tic Toc, or painting plein air, we learned just how important the arts are in helping us cope with the dreadful sense of hopelessness, despair, stress and anxiety caused by prolonged social isolation. The arts have the power to unite, heal, and soothe. They provide us with a space to express our grief, solace, wonder and joy. And, for many suffering from mental illness and depression, these therapeutic qualities are lifeline that help safeguard their mental and spiritual health.

The arts provide a means for seniors to remain active and productive in the community as participants, volunteers and audience members. Controlled research by the Center on Aging found that older Americans involved in the arts demonstrated better health, fewer doctor visits, and less medication usage – saving money and improving the quality of life of seniors.¹⁸

As Howard County's special needs and senior populations grow, more programs, such as the Arts Council's Fabulous Fifty+ Players musical theatre program for older adults and the No Boundaries musical theatre program for people with developmental disabilities, will be needed to meet their needs. In addition,

infrastructure and specialized training and professional arts service providers are needed to integrate the arts into community health and wellness service delivery systems.

4) Youth At Risk

The arts help at-risk youth. Numerous studies have found that arts education programs can help reduce dropout rates - increasing the retention and engagement rates of students and raising educational attainment levels. Participation in arts programs decreases young people's involvement in delinquent behavior, increases academic outcomes for disadvantaged children, and improves students' attitudes about themselves and their future. Studies by the U.S. Department of Justice demonstrate increased pro-social behavior among adjudicated youth involved with arts programs.¹⁹ Similarly, an evaluation of Core Arts examined the effect of arts programs on adjudicated youth in Mississippi and found that participants in this program made notable improvement in cooperation, self-control, academic performance, interpersonal skills, attitude, and incidence of disruptive or risky behavior.²⁰

As the number of youth-related incidents continues to rise, Howard County may want to explore options to use the arts as a preventative measure or as an alternative teaching method for troubled youth or those suffering from mental health issues.

5) Community Revitalization

The arts are a powerful tool in community development and revitalization. They transform communities into special places by activating declining neighborhoods, bringing people together, creating a welcoming sense of place, and instilling a sense of community pride that is at the core of community building. Urban and cultural planners across the globe have used creative placemaking as a strategy to develop and revitalize cities and neighborhoods. It is a proven strategy that marries arts development with economic development and community

development. The process typically starts with artists creating a stabilizing presence -- establishing studios, opening arts spaces, providing community activities in neighborhoods that are in flux. They make art and get involved in organizing community events and festivals. Soon people hear about interesting things happening in that neighborhood and want to see it for themselves. That foot traffic creates even more buzz - attracting entrepreneurs and businesses who want to invest in the neighborhood. Coffee shops, restaurants, and unique boutiques start popping up. New people are attracted to the neighborhood and choose to move there. Most importantly, the social and economic health of the community is improved - enhancing the well-being of local residents and helping the quality of life and local businesses to "rise" along with the neighborhood.

In closing, as County leaders plan for a future after COVID-19, the arts can be- and should be- part of the solution for economic recovery, academic success, community health, and our own personal wellness. All of us in the arts look forward to working with you to ensure our community remains vital and resilient and look forward to bringing world class art and joyful creative moments back to full houses in REAL time – REAL soon.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you this evening, please support full funding for the arts.

¹ Clay Lord, "We are the One We've Been Waiting For", ArtsLink, Americans for the Arts, Spring 2021, page 13.

² Surale Phillips and Seven R. Nivin, Ph.D, *Update on COVID-19 Impacts on Maryland's Arts + Culture Sector*, Maryland Citizen's for the Arts, December 6, 2021.

³ *Attendance Report for FY19 Grantees*, Howard County Arts Council, 2019.

⁴ *Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2020*, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts, March 2022.

⁵ *Ready To Innovate*, Conference Board, 2008. Also cited on www.artsusa.org/information_services/toolkit by Americans for the Arts.

⁶ Richard Florida, "America's Leading Creative Class Cities in 2015," *City Lab*, The Atlantic Monthly Group, April 20, 2015.

⁷ *Creative Industries: Business & Employment in the Arts*, Americans for the Arts and Dun & Bradstreet, 2017.

⁸ *Needs Assessment For Arts Facilities*, Howard County, MD, Webb Management Services, 2015, pg 20.

⁹ *Revenue Sources for FY19 Grantees*, Howard County Arts Council, 2018.

¹⁰ *Creative Industries 2017: The State Report*, Americans for the Arts and Dun & Bradstreet, 2017.

¹¹ *Economic Impact of the Arts in Maryland*, Maryland Department of Commerce, 2019.

<https://www.msac.org/publications/fiscal-year-2019-annual-report>

¹² *ArtsVision: State of the Arts in Howard County 2003*, Howard County Arts Council and Vision Howard County, 2003, page 21.

¹³ *Economic Impact of the Arts in Maryland*, Maryland Department of Commerce, 2019.

¹⁴ *2016 College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile Report*, The College Board, 2017; analysis by Americans for the Arts, 2018.

¹⁵ *A Study of Model Community Arts Programs*, Howard County Arts Council and the Horizon Foundation , 2002, pp 76-77.

¹⁶ *2009 State of the Field Report: Arts in Healthcare*, Society for the Arts in Healthcare, 2009.

¹⁷ Source: blog.americansforthearts.org/2017/02/14/top-10-reasons-to-support-the-arts-in-2017.

¹⁸ Source: Americans For the Arts, www.artsusa.org.

¹⁹ Source: Americans For The Arts, www.artsusa.org.

²⁰ *A Study of Model Community Arts Programs*, Howard County Arts Council and the Horizon Foundation, 2002, pp 77-78.



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Erika Chavarria, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Columbia Community Care to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding the Budget Hearing to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Erika Chavarria

Signature: 

Date: 5/3/2022

Organization: Columbia Community Care

Organization Address: 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 336, Columbia, MD 21044

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 336, Columbia, MD 21044

Number of Members: 7500

Name of Chair/President: Erika Chavarria

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HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Robert M. Gillette, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

The Howard County Veterans Foundation, Inc. to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding FY2023 Operating Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Robert M. Gillette

Signature: 

Date: 04/22/2022

Organization: The Howard County Veterans Foundation, Inc.

Organization Address: 4759 De Inverno Place, Mount Airy, MD 21771

4759 De Inverno Place, Mount Airy, MD 21771

Number of Members: N/A

Name of Chair/President: Robert M. Gillette

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Sayers, Margery

From: Alison Hickman <alisonhickman@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 7, 2022 9:10 AM
To: Sayers, Margery
Subject: Re: Affidavit to Speak
Attachments: Group_Representative_Affidavit_Digital.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Hi see attached- thank you!

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

1. Alison Hickman (name of individual) have been duly authorized by Columbia Festival of the Arts (name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force) to deliver testimony to the County Council regarding Operating Budget Public Hearing (Bill or resolution number) to express the organization's support for/opposition to/request to amend this legislation. (Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Alison Hickman
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]
Date: 5/7/22
Organization: Columbia Festival of the Arts
Organization Address: 10475 Little Patuxent Parkway
Columbia, MD 21044
Number of Members: 15
Name of Chair/President: Alison Hickman

This form can be submitted electronically via email to council@hcc.howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing

Sent from my iPhone

On May 7, 2022, at 7:59 AM, Sayers, Margery <msayers@howardcountymd.gov> wrote:

Good Morning

You have signed up to testify on behalf of a group at the Operating Budget Public Hearing on Monday, May 9 at 7pm. Please submit the attached affidavit by 12pm on Monday. If you have already submitted it, please disregard this email and thank you!

Sincerely,
Margery

Margery Sayers
Executive Assistant
Howard County Council
410-313-0832



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Aaron Shapiro, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Patapsco Heritage Greenway, Inc. to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding FY23 Operating Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Aaron Shapiro

Signature: 

Date: 4/26/22

Organization: Patapsco Heritage Greenway

Organization Address: 3748 Old Columbia Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21043

3748 Old Columbia Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Number of Members: 22 Board Members

Name of Chair/President: Mark Southerland

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**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Amanda Hof, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard County Tourism Council, Inc. to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding FY23 Operating Budget Tourism Council's Amount to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Amanda Hof

Signature: 

Date: 05.03.2022

Organization: Howard County Tourism Council, Inc.

Organization Address: 8267 Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043

8267 Main Street, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Number of Members: 17

Name of Chair/President: Yolande Lacan

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HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Laura Bacon, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

The 3rd to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding 2023 Operating Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Laura Bacon

Signature: 

Date: 5/4/22

Organization: The 3rd

Organization Address: Columbia, MD 21044

Columbia, MD 21044

Number of Members: 115

Name of Chair/President: Laura Bacon

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HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

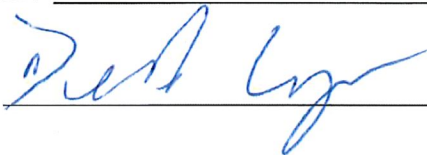
I, De'Andre Wiggins, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Power52 Foundation to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding FY 2023 Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: De'Andre Wiggins

Signature: 

Date: May 3, 2022

Organization: Power52 Foundation

Organization Address: 8775 Cloudleap Court Suite 11, Columbia, MD 21045

8775 Cloudleap Court Suite 11, Columbia, MD 21045

Number of Members: 4

Name of Chair/President: Cherie Brooks

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HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Chimaobi Chijioke, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Camp Attaway to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding Proposed Operating Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Chimaobi Chijioke

Signature: Chimaobi Chijioke

Date: 5/9/2022

Organization: Camp Attaway

Organization Address: 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite #303, Columbia, MD 21046

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite #303, Columbia, MD 21046

Number of Members: 9

Name of Chair/President: Karen Cherry

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HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Marlena Jareaux, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard County Lynching Truth & Reconciliation Inc to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding Operating budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Marlena Jareaux

Signature: 

Date: 5/4/2022

Organization: Howard County Lynching Truth & Reconciliation, Inc.

Organization Address: 10400 Shaker Dr. #174 Simpsonville MD 21150

Number of Members: 5

Name of Chair/President: Lynn Mumma (interim President)

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**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Jennifer Broderick, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Bridges to Housing Stability, Inc to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding Operating Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Jennifer Broderick

Signature: Jennifer Broderick

Date: 5/4/2022

Organization: Bridges to Housing Stability, Inc.

Organization Address: Columbia, MD 21046 9520 Berger Rd Suite 311

Columbia, MD 21046

Number of Members: 21 staff, 12 Board Members

Name of Chair/President: Jessica Zuniga

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**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Kony Serrano Portillo, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

CASA to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding FY23 Budget in support for the creation of a Maternity Partnership Program to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Kony Serrano Portillo

Signature: 

Date: May 6, 2022

Organization: CASA

Organization Address: 8151 15th Avenue Langley Park, MD 20781

8151 15th Avenue Langley Park, MD 20781

Number of Members: 122,000

Name of Chair/President: Gustavo Torres

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**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Shelby J Thomas, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Chase Brexton HealthCare to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding Maternity Partnership Program to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Shelby J Thomas

Signature: _____

Date: 05/09/2022

Organization: Chase Brexton HealthCare

Organization Address: 5500 Knoll Noth Drive, Suite 370 Columbia, MD 20145

5500 Knoll Noth Drive, Suite 370 Columbia, MD 20145

Number of Members: _____

Name of Chair/President: Patrick Mutch

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HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, GERARD CHARLOT, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

AACR HOWARD COUNTY to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CB34 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.

(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: GERARD CHARLOT

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Date: 5/9/22

Organization: AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY COUNCILS OF HC

Organization Address: P.O. BOX 958

COLUMBIA, MD 21044

Number of Members: 10K+

Name of Chair/President: TRACY WILLIAMS

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Sayers, Margery

From: Andrew Levine <alevine0420@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 7:07 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Fwd: Support for Columbia Community Care in FY23 Budget

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Andrew Levine <alevine0420@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 9, 2022, 6:35 PM
Subject: Support for Columbia Community Care in FY23 Budget
To: <councilmail@howardcountymg.gov>

Esteemed Council,

I am writing to voice my support for including support to Columbia Community Care in the FY23 budget. Since the pandemic started, this fine organization has provided support for the County by distributing literally tons of food and personal goods to needy families at the sites and through delivery programs. I have volunteered for this great organization nearly from its inception and have seen the great work they do for the community. Even now, more than 2 years from the start of the pandemic, we still support more than 200 people weekly at the centers. And, with the opening of the Center for Peace and Justice, even more local families will be enabled to partake of a wealth of valuable community services.

When determining the FY23 budget, please ensure to generously include Columbia Community Care. The funds will be well spent to support families in need throughout the county.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andrew Levine

Good evening. My name is Meg Feroli, I am here tonight to show my support for the inclusion of a \$30,000 contribution to Columbia Community Care in the Howard County 2023 budget proposal. Two years ago, Columbia Community Care didn't even exist. Since March of 2020, I have worked in partnership with its founder, Erika Chavarria from the day CCC was launched. Erika matched my concerns for the students that we each worked with at different schools, Wilde Lake and Oakland Mills. I never met her before schools were shut down. But once I saw her put out a call for volunteers, I knew she had the same sick feeling in her gut that I had in mine. We knew that so many of our students and their families depend on the meals and food programs provided by the school system, that a huge gap in their daily nutrition would be left by the closure of schools during the 2020 pandemic lockdown. We wanted to make sure our kids were being fed. Following the lockdown, I joined Erika in setting up sites around Columbia, we put out calls for donations, and people provided. And people in need came, by the hundreds.

The thing that struck me in those first days of CCC was the fear that we saw in the people who came to us for help. Fear that they would be asked for paperwork, fear that we would ask questions, fear that we would run out of food, fear that we wouldn't be back the next day. And it really got to me to see people in my community, where I have lived for over 30 years, people in such great need that they would fight for a spot in the lines that would form at our sites two, or even 3 hours before our sites opened. They would fight for a spot to get 10 cans of food, some fresh produce and some household necessities. I was genuinely stunned to pull into the parking lot at Swansfield Elementary school, that was our de facto headquarters in the beginning, and see 20 - 30 people already waiting hours beforehand, whole families, kids in strollers, watching as we unloaded donations and set up tables, hoping there would be enough to go around.

This is Columbia Maryland. This community has been a shining example of urban planning and development since it began in the 1970's. This is Columbia Maryland, in Howard County, one of the top counties in the country for per capita income, the best schools, and a national reputation for inclusion and racial harmony. And here I was, unpacking donated groceries to hand out to over 100 people a day in the beginning, people who had genuine fear that they would not be able to feed their families. In Columbia Maryland. It was very disconcerting to me.

But I was also amazed to see the generosity of the Columbia community. Food, donations, money all appeared to help us help the people who came to us. During the pandemic, and now, we are grateful for the support of the County Executive and Jennifer Jones who have above and beyond to help in whatever way they could. We received pandemic grants and support from local churches, Scout groups, youth groups, and individuals. Local farms and home gardeners brought fresh fruits and vegetables, local chicken farmers brought eggs. We have been so proud of the fact that we can provide fresh produce, and at times even milk, eggs and meat to people who can't afford to buy those items for their family meals. It was the most amazing demonstration of a grassroots organization that I have ever seen. Volunteers then and now come and work hard, setting up food distribution sites in all sorts of weather conditions, they drive food to people who can't leave their homes, They are still with us through constant space and organizational changes and they show up and treat the people who come to CCC with dignity and grace.

Everyone asks us when we will stop. Our answer is, when there is no more need. The need still exists. The numbers of people who come to our sites have not dwindled. In fact, in recent weeks the rising costs of groceries has brought people back to us that had been able to get by on their own until inflation hit. We still see new faces in our lines. People who ask, "How does this work, do I need to fill out a form?" We also have had so many people who have come through every single week since we started. We have seen more and more of the aging population coming to us for help. A fixed income is not enough for people to get by on these days. They need help.

Columbia Community Care stepped in to fill what I think of as a pothole of poverty in the county. People know it's there, they try to avoid it, they skirt around it, they hope somebody will get around to fixing it. I proudly continue my commitment to working with Columbia Community Care. I have personally seen the difference it makes to families who are now smiling when they come to us, they are grateful, we know them, they are our neighbors. We have told them that we will be here as long as we are needed. I hope and pray for a day when we are not needed, but until then we are very thankful for any support the County can provide CCC so that we can continue to provide for Howard County residents who have come to depend on us. The generosity and food donations of the community have been keeping CCC stocked, but we could be doing so much more. No one in Howard County should go to bed hungry. I thank you for your support.

Thank you for your consideration. CCC hopes that we can work together to continue to help our neighbors in need. I also invite you to observe our distribution sites in action every Saturday morning between 9:30 and 11:30am at the Wilde Lake Interfaith Center 10431 Twin Rivers Rd. Columbia, MD 21044 • Oakland Mills Village Center The Barn 5853 Robert Oliver Place, Suite 109, Columbia, MD 21045 • Long Reach Village Center 8775 Cloudleap Ct. Columbia, MD 21045.

Meg Feroli
6428 Elffolk Terrace
Columbia, MD 21045