

Habicht, Kelli

From: Feldmark, Jessica
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 9:34 AM
To: Sayers, Margery; Habicht, Kelli
Subject: for CB23-2015 and CR73-2015
Attachments: I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; Vote FOR Amendments 2 and 26; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!; I support Amendments 2 and 26!

Jessica Feldmark
Administrator
Howard County Council
410-313-3111
jfeldmark@howardcountymd.gov

Habicht, Kelli

From: Anne Cavanaugh <acavanaugh88@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 9:31 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

Please restore educational funding. We are already looking at staff reductions which will increase class size. We are on the front lines doing what is best for our students every day. More and more is expected with the Common Core and testing requirements. Do what's best for our community and students and restore the educational funding.

Thank you,
Anne Cavanaugh
English teacher
Clarksville Middle School

Habicht, Kelli

From: Michelle Flynn <loftusflynn@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 8:58 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Vote FOR Amendments 2 and 26

Good morning!

I am writing to encourage you to vote FOR Amendments 2 and 26 authored by Councilman Calvin Ball and Councilwoman Jen Terrasa. We need to support education in Howard County!

**Thank you for your consideration,
Michelle L. Flynn**

Habicht, Kelli

From: LeeAnn Sanna <LeeAnn_Sanna@hcpss.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 7:48 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

Please vote for Amendments 2 and 26.

Thank you.

Lee Ann Sanna
Family and Consumer Science Teacher
Elkridge Landing Middle School
leeann_sanna@hcpss.org

Habicht, Kelli

From: Justin Kolnik <jkolni1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 9:28 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

Please support our educators.

Habicht, Kelli

From: Binki McKenna <binkimckenna@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 8:36 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

Dear County Council committee members,

Please support Amendments 2 & 26 as proposed by Council members Calvin Ball and Jen Terrasa for funding to educators for COLA or salary step increases. Educators face many challenges every day, but budget cuts already equate to reduced staffing, increased workload and increased class sizes. HCPSS is #1 in Maryland, but not #1 in compensation. Families move to Howard County because our schools are the best. Show educators that they are appreciated and valued in this county by finding these Amendments.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Binki McKenna
Media Specialist, Reservoir High School

Sent from my iPhone
Binki McKenna

Habicht, Kelli

From: Marcy Stone <marcyg23@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 1:02 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

Habicht, Kelli

From: theresa shamoo <tshamoo@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 9:24 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

The teachers of Howard County work extremely hard for our students and at least deserve to receive the "step" according to our pay scale. Please support these amendments so that we can be rightly compensated. Thank you!
Theresa Shamoo

Habicht, Kelli

From: Lluthe <lluthe@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 8:23 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

My name is Larry Luthe, and I have been a mathematics teacher in Howard County for the past 24 years. With the introduction of Common Core, increased paperwork from 504's, Special Ed cases, and ESOL children, I have spent more time outside of the school day preparing than I have ever done so in my life. In my Geometry class of 29 students, I have 4 special ed students, 3 ESOL kids, and 3 kids who failed Algebra 1 twice, and passed in summer school.

We are now going to have a new grading and home access program, and the county is housing all of it's information on a new sight. I am sure all of this will eventually make it "easier" to do our job. In the mean time, we are losing planning and administrative time to learn the new systems. I have written 8 letters of recommendation, in the past, I sponsored a class, and we continue to show up at dances, proms, and other events. Many teachers have sacrificed things with their own family to be part of the school "community". It is part of the job, and I am proud to be a teacher.

To find out that we have not been offered a step increase or a COLA increase is disappointing, and truthfully, hurtful. I know money doesn't grow on trees. My expenses continue to grow, but my salary is stagnant. If insurance companies get there way, our premiums will go up, and my take home pay will be less. My kids are 14 and 16, so college expenses are right around the corner, and University of MD just had a tuition increase. Everyday, I watch the the teacher's parking lot fill by 6:50 am, teachers are in their class room tutoring students before school. After school, the math hallway still has teachers tutoring, grading papers, preparing for tomorrow well past 3 pm. That is 20 minutes before and after contract hours. That's an additional 10 days year worth of work Mt. Hebron math teachers give the school system everyday. If multiplied by 18 teachers in the math department, that is like having an extra teacher. We are not even worth a COLA.

My thoughts,
Lawrence Luthe

Habicht, Kelli

From: Anna Gannon <msgannon11@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 9:07 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

I urge you to support Amendments 2 and 26 today. Restoring crucial funding to the County Executive's budget allows the Howard County School system to invest in its community by investing in it's workforce. As a career educator of 21 years and life-long resident of Howard County, I am always honored to recruit new candidates to come the the school system where I'm a product of and that I've devoted my life to as well. However, we will not continue to be considered in a competitive market if we do not invest in our workforce. I spend countless hours working above and beyond for my students...to provide them with the quality of education that they deserve. Failure to invest in our education system will be a failure for our students.

Please support Amendements 2 and 26!

Respectfully,
Anna Gannon

Habicht, Kelli

From: Lauren Grant <lgrant2.lg@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2015 8:11 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support Amendments 2 and 26!

Please vote for amendments 2 and 26! WE educate your children every day and have the right to fair wages and treatment. We should not have to grovel year after to year for our cost of living.

Thank you,
Lauren Grant
English Instructional Team Leader & Teacher
National Board Certified Teacher
Reservoir High School

County Council Public Hearing: FY16 Capital and Operating Budget
Written Testimony of
PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC) on the FY16 HCPSS Operating Budget
Presented by: Christina Delmont-Small, President
May 12, 2015 @ 7pm

My name is Christina Delmont-Small and I'm the president of the PTA Council of Howard County. PTACHC represents all 74 Howard County PTAs and over 20,000 members.

I am here this evening to advance the overall purpose of PTA - to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTACHC urges the County Council to restore funding to the FY16 HCPSS Operating budget so that the budget that was passed by the Board of Education, and presented to the County Executive, is fully funded.

We hope you will continue the historic commitment to education that has been made by Howard County's elected officials and allocate funding that will enable the Howard County Public School System to provide the quality education our parents and community expect from our schools. We encourage both the County Council and County Executive to fully fund the Board of Education's budget request and financially support our schools so that they can provide the environment necessary for every student to achieve their personal best.

Testimony for County Council Budget Hearing
Brianna Lawton, Student Howard Community College
May 12, 2015, at 7 p.m.

Good evening, Howard County Council members.

My name is Brianna Lawton, and I am a resident of Columbia.

It is a pleasure to see you again, as I had the privilege of speaking to you at the Howard Community College legislative breakfast.

My journey to Howard Community College actually began at a four-year university. A proud graduate of Long Reach High School, I launched into my college experience without really knowing the cost and how I would afford it. I had picked my university after earning a merit scholarship, but my scholarship was cut back after just one year, and there was no way that I could continue at the high tuition rates.

I returned home looking for an affordable college that would have the same quality academics and found Howard Community College! I had long known of the college and had previously applied, but I am so thankful that I returned again!

As someone who is passionate about engineering, Howard Community College gave me the opportunity to get involved – and even lead – student clubs. HCC also gave me the opportunity to network and meet students, professors, and business leaders who share the same excitement about engineering. I also had the opportunity to explore different fields of engineering and to find the one that suited me best – civil engineering.

At HCC, I have benefited from interactive hands-on activities that enforce what I learn inside the classroom and enhance my skills in order to solve problems facing society.

While I have had a wonderful experience in the college's engineering program, I know that having a science, engineering, and technology building will provide access to even greater numbers of students, plus provide more spaces to learn and to develop collaborative mentoring relationships between students and their professors.

The SET building is a stepping stone for students as they pursue their engineering degrees. I know firsthand that being a STEM major is not easy, but the hard work and perseverance will pay off. And that goal keeps me going, knowing that no matter what I face.

I look forward to returning to the college in two years to celebrate my graduation from my transfer university and to celebrate the new building that will inspire future generations of engineers – just like me – to get there from here.

Testimony for County Council Budget Hearing
Kate Hetherington, President, Howard Community College
May 12, 2015, at 7 p.m.

Good evening, members of the County Council. I am Dr. Kate Hetherington, president of Howard Community College, and a resident of Columbia.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the faculty, staff, and 30,000 credit and noncredit students of Howard Community College. I am joined by our faculty and staff tonight, and would like them to stand and be recognized for their commitment to HCC students.

I am so proud of the work of our faculty and staff in providing students with pathways to success. Over the last 10 years, we have seen more and more residents choose Howard Community College, and we continue to show enrollment consistency. Between fall 2004 to fall 2014, our enrollment headcount has jumped by 51 percent – that's 3,473 more students in our

classrooms and depending on our services. Consider this: The University of Baltimore has an undergraduate enrollment of 3,485. We have literally grown the equivalent of a university in one decade. And over the next ten years, we anticipate growing by 28 percent.

We are educating, retraining, and supporting recent high school graduates, local business employees, career changers, veterans, and residents of all ages. While we have had a significant increase in students, the funding needed to support these students has not kept pace with our enrollment growth.

Just this year, we experienced a mid-year operating budget cut of just over \$698,000 from the state of Maryland.

As a result, we have taken steps to reduce our costs by:

- Slowing our hiring process, and in some cases, freezing vacant positions.
- Cutting back on contracted services.

- Reducing and – in some cases – restricting travel, which limits professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.
- Reallocating funding to cover essential maintenance of equipment.
- And even postponing the purchase of necessary equipment despite having original equipment well past its prime.

In addition, our employee workloads have increased significantly with additional job responsibilities for salaried employees who do not receive overtime pay. Even with increased workload, we still cannot always provide services and support to our students at the levels they deserve because of lack of staff.

In spite of these challenges, we have accomplished a dramatic increase in completion. The number of students earning degrees and certificates increased more than 60 percent over the past five years. In just one week, I look forward to seeing many of you at our commencement. This year we will graduate the largest

class in the college's history, 1,197 students, achieving 1,270 degrees and/or certificates.

This growth in enrollment and completion at HCC has resulted in a stronger, more vibrant Howard County. For instance:

- For every dollar the county invests in the college, taxpayers see an 11.3 percent return on the investment.
- Also, the Howard County economy receives approximately \$55.8 million in income each year thanks to the college and its students.

Despite these successes, the state will provide the college with just \$250,000 more in operating funds when compared to this time last year. The statewide funding formula calls for \$820,000 more, but the state's Budget Reconciliation and Finance Act has kept the community colleges from receiving budget parity.

We are grateful for everything our state and our county legislators have done and continue to do to support high quality, higher education within Howard County.

Prior to submitting our budget request, we first asked faculty and staff to examine opportunities to save money and reallocate funds before making any new requests. This year, as part of that process, we reallocated more than \$1.7 million.

Even after this reallocation, the college originally requested a nine percent increase from the county. However, the County Executive did not recommend an increase. His budget proposal calls for flat funding.

The college has reduced its request from 11 positions to just one-and-a-half new positions. Those positions are essential: a full-time faculty member in our new dental hygiene program to ensure we meet accreditation requirements, and a half- position to replace a previously funded grant position.

While we continue to do more with less, we cannot forget the importance of supporting and recognizing the dedication of our employees who make educating our students possible.

Therefore, our budget includes a small one-and-a-half percent salary increase to recognize our faculty and staff. No cost of living adjustments and no step increases are given to HCC employees. All salary increases are based on merit performance. To make this small increase possible, we propose delaying the salary adjustments until September to ensure that we will have the funding necessary to cover costs. So the one-and-a-half percent increase is really a one-and-a-quarter percent increase because of the delay until September.

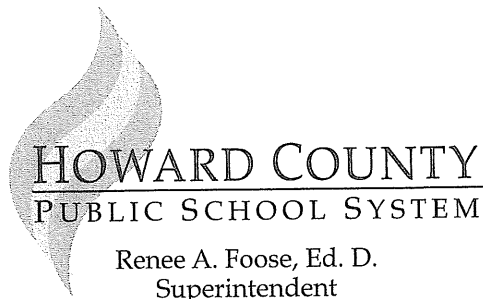
The budget also includes a pay increase for adjunct faculty. Our original budget request called for an increase of \$35 per credit hour, but we have reduced our request to \$10 per credit hour. This would mark the third consecutive year for an adjunct faculty salary increase, but the pay rate remains below Prince George's Community College – our partner institution at the Laurel College Center.

Tuition increases will be necessary to close our funding shortfall. Our fiscal year 2016 operating budget now contains a \$5 tuition increase that would take the in-county resident tuition rate to \$132 per credit hour, representing a four percent increase. It was a hard decision for the college, but we did so knowing that we still remain the most affordable education option for Howard County residents and we will do everything possible to assist students with financial aid and scholarship support.

We know that the County Council cannot increase our operating budget above what the County Executive has put in his budget. Our students, faculty and staff are truly appreciative of the county's support over the years.

Investing in Howard Community College is an investment in the local workforce and in the future of Howard County. Please continue to support our students on their pathways to success.

Thank you.



HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Renee A. Foose, Ed. D.
Superintendent
410-313-6674

Superintendent's Testimony Howard County Council Budget Hearing – Tuesday, May 12, 2015, 7 p.m.

Good evening, Chairperson Sigaty and members of the Council.

The school system greatly appreciates the County Executive's proposed budget funding and the historically strong support we have received from both the Executive and County Council. Howard County public schools continue to set a standard for excellence in our state and nation. But much work remains to ensure that every child who enters our school system graduates well prepared for college or a living-wage career.

Our student population is growing rapidly, both in numbers and diversity. Enrollment is projected to increase significantly next year, and to continue to rise for several years. Rapid growth brings significant added costs, which are not included in Maintenance of Effort funding.

Increasing numbers of students struggle with significant challenges that interfere with learning. Nearly 1 in 5 lives in poverty. The future of these children – and that of our entire county – depends on our success in preparing them with the skills to build a prosperous life. Funding is needed for the additional staffing and specialized services that help these students thrive.

Vision 2018, our system's strategic plan, inspires our work in building a world class educational program that fulfills the promise of preparation for every child. The budget includes funding to build on innovative programs, such as our new model for elementary education and K-12 world language instruction, which expand every child's potential to learn and grow. These initiatives are already delivering positive results in raising levels of engagement and achievement for all students, and narrowing our achievement gaps.

The skill and commitment of top-notch teachers and staff are at the heart of our system's success. Continued progress depends upon maintaining and attracting highly qualified employees. The FY16 budget includes funding to cover the salary increases agreed upon in the FY15 arbitration process, and additional funding to cover rising employee pension and health costs.

Our system is committed to sustaining our current high standards of educational excellence while ensuring fiscal responsibility to our county. We have adopted long-term, cost-saving measures and process improvements that have already shown impressive results and will deliver even greater returns in the FY 2016 budget cycle and through upcoming years.

The quality of our school system reflects the steadfast support of our community and county leaders. Thank you for your strong personal commitment to our schools and students. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our system has the resources necessary to provide a world-class education for every Howard County child.



Renee A. Foose, Ed. D.
Superintendent



Howard County Council's Budget Hearing
May 12, 2015

Testimony in support of Howard County Library System
Bruce I. Rothschild
Chair, Howard County Library System Board of Trustees

Good evening. I am Bruce Rothschild, Chair of the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees. On behalf of the entire Board, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Library System.

As strong advocates for education, you know that education promotes economic development and contributes to our county's reputation for excellence. The Board is proud that Howard County Library System continues to receive accolades for its mission to deliver high-quality public education for all.

While Ann Gilligan will focus on our FY 16 Operating Budget, I will summarize our proposed capital project.

We have requested funding in FY 16 to begin the schematic design for a new Elkridge Branch. With the third largest population district in Howard County, Elkridge requires an expanded branch to accommodate expected continued growth. At the community sessions held in 2013, Elkridge residents spoke passionately about the need for a new, larger library branch that will offer more classroom and community space, feature updated technology, and include space for an expanded collection. This new Elkridge Branch will serve as an educational hub for students of all ages, and residents eagerly await the groundbreaking for this new education center for their community.

Investing in this capital project continues to remedy Howard County Library System's space deficits based on industry standards and Howard County's growing population, especially in the eastern part of the county. Equally important, the investment further elevates the County's reputation for world-class education.

We recognize the challenges the County is facing, and we look forward to discussing these projects with you at the work session.

Thank you for considering our request, and for the many ways you demonstrate your support.

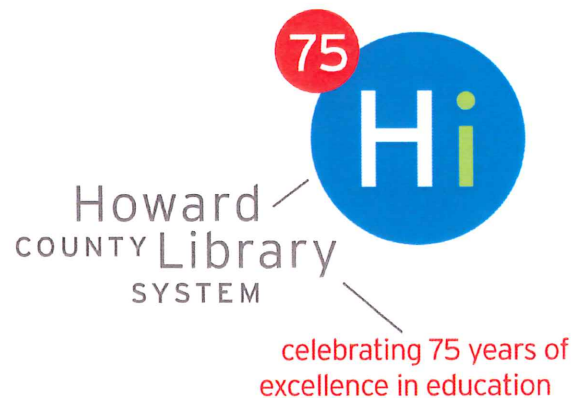
Respectfully submitted,



Bruce I. Rothschild

Howard County Council's Budget Hearing
May 12, 2015

Testimony in support of Howard County Library System
Ann Gilligan
Chief Operating Officer, Howard County Library System



Good evening. I am Ann Gilligan, Chief Operating Officer of Howard County Library System. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of Howard County Library System, and also Howard County's 300,000 residents.

First, we express our gratitude for the many ways you support Howard County Library System—which this year celebrates its 75th Diamond Anniversary! We credit you for our continued distinguished status as a model 21st century educational institution. Thank you for recognizing that a strong investment in *public education for everyone* is a strong investment in our community's future.

We appreciate that the County Executive's proposed FY 16 Operating Budget includes flat level County funding. Our commitment to you and to this community is to deliver the best curriculum possible with the funding we receive under each of our Three Pillars: Self-Directed Education, Research Assistance & Instruction, and Instructive & Enlightening Experiences.

Our statistics continue to astound. Students of all ages visited our six branches **3 million times** last year to borrow **7 million items**—the highest per capita borrowing rate in the state. **Two million** people received expert research assistance, and more than **a quarter of a million** students of all ages attended our classes and events—like What's In My Artbox? for toddlers; Teen Time and Homework Clubs, as well as HCLS Project Literacy, our adult basic education program where our instructors teach 400 students English and basic math, and prepare them to pass U.S. citizenship tests, and to graduate with a GED.



At HiTech, our STEM education initiative for teens, attendance has reached 5,000. We plan to pilot extending HiTech to adult students this coming year, beginning with an introduction to 3D printing this fall.

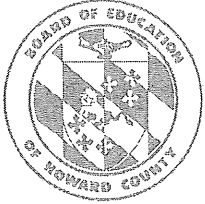
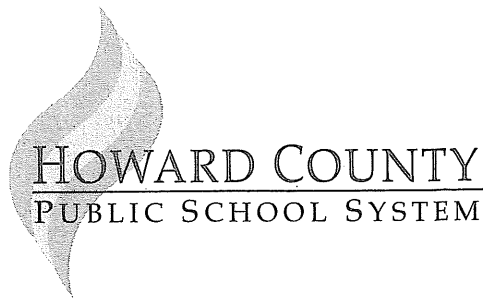
A few concluding highlights, we thank our A+ Partners for collaborating with us to present the HCLS Spelling Bee and its BumbleBee companion. More than 500 fourth and fifth graders have enrolled in the Rube Goldberg Challenge (the assignment this year is to build a wacky machine that crushes and recycles an empty soft drink can). And, as a number of you recently experienced, Battle of the Books comprised 240 teams (that's 1,200 students—one third of all Howard County fifth graders! Taking a 50-question exam on 16 pre-assigned books, students competed for best score, best costume, best team name, best team spirit, and best civility. .

Education is more important than ever in this knowledge-based economy. Howard County Library System represents less than two percent of the County's budget—a *smart* investment for a great return.

I urge you to fully fund the County Executive's proposed FY 16 Operating Budget for the Library System, and also his proposed Capital Budget. Thank you for your trust in us, and for the many ways you demonstrate your support. We look forward to providing you with more details at our work session.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann T. Gilligan



Board of Education of Howard County

Janet Siddiqui, M.D.
Chairman

Ann De Lacy
Vice Chairman

Bess Altwerger, Ed.D.

Sandra H. French

Ellen Flynn Giles

Christine E. O'Connor

Cynthia L. Vaillancourt

Patrick B. Mikulis
Student Member

Renee A. Foose, Ed.D.
*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

Board of Education of Howard County Testimony Howard County Council Budget Hearing – Tuesday, May 12, 2015, 7 p.m.

Good evening, Chairperson Sigaty and members of the Council. As Chairman of the Board of Education, I appreciate this opportunity to represent the Board and the school system, and to advocate for the county's 53,000 public school students.

The success of our public schools is closely linked to our county's prosperity. A large and growing proportion of our county population faces poverty and other challenges that impede a child's prospects for lifelong success. Strategic investments in education give every child an opportunity to thrive, and enhance the long term outlook for our entire county.

Student enrollment is steadily rising in step with our county's rapid growth. The expected influx of hundreds of new students adds significant costs to our operating budget that are not included in Maintenance of Effort funding, which is based on prior year enrollment.

A large proportion of our budget increase reflects rising health and pension costs, as well as \$11.5 million for salary increases negotiated in FY15.

We have positioned the system well financially over the past several years, and maintain one of the leanest operations among Maryland school systems. But we continue to streamline operations so that the greatest possible proportion of our budget directly supports teaching and learning. Zero-Based Budgeting was adopted in FY15 and continues to drive improved operations and significant reductions to our bottom line.

To offset our budget increase, we have reallocated existing positions to accommodate growing enrollment without a corresponding increase in student-teacher ratios, which are an important factor to student achievement. We have proactively offered an early retirement program that is expected to deliver millions of dollars in savings over the next several years. And while participation levels for our benefits plans continue to rise, our per-member claims cost is among the lowest in Maryland.

Regarding the FY16 Capital Budget, the Board's request will provide for adequate facilities to serve the growing population along the Route 1 corridor and in downtown Columbia, and to renovate aging school buildings that urgently require upgrade. The Board of Education understands the budgetary pressures facing our local government. We look forward to working with county leaders to find solutions that meet our most urgent capital needs, while maintaining responsible fiscal stewardship to our community.

I want to thank you for sharing our commitment to building the world class school system that fulfills the promise of preparation for every Howard County student. We look forward to our continued collaboration in maintaining the quality education that our students deserve and our community expects.

Janet Siddiqui, M.D.

Chairman, Howard County Board of Education

My name is Meagan Braganca. I live at 3720 Valerie Carol Court Ellicott City. I am the Chair of Sierra Club Howard County, and I am speaking on behalf of our Executive Committee.

I am here tonight to talk about the \$5M in the County's Capital Budget to install artificial turf in three county parks and three high schools. While we know this project started a few years ago under the former County Executive, I am speaking here tonight because of the national growing concerns for the safety of artificial turf and its infill.

As you have seen in my letters on this subject, the concerns stem from the crumb rubber infill to the fake grass blades themselves. As reported by NBC News, there is specifically, a growing concern of a linkage between non-Hodgkins lymphoma and the crumb rubber made of recycled tires. Just recently, the EPA has cut ties with the Workgroup that had been responsible for the recycled tire program- at the same time the agency has posted all the compounds found in tires- the precursor of crumb rubber. Many of which are carcinogenic. The health concerns are a topic of hot debate across the country- so much so that more & more school districts and municipalities are banning this type of infill.

One of these school districts in L.A. United. I spoke with Brad Smith in the Env. Health & Safety Department with LA United. They are responsible for the maintenance of the athletic fields. The district has 45 artificial turf fields He told me that they are now using flex sand as an infill, but that it is requiring more maintenance than they thought it would since the sand tends to bunch up under the turf. It has to be raked extensively and wet down before games/heavy use. He also said they've had problems with early wear & tear. They're currently replacing several fields that are less than five years old. He said the artificial turf is not maintenance-free and in fact that for what it has cost them to maintain the fields, they could have resodded them 4 times over.

What are we asking?

1. To give stadium-grade natural grass a shot. With the newest installation & drainage abilities, natural grass can take high amounts of foot traffic/playability.
2. For locations where artificial turf is still an option, consider not using crumb rubber as an infill.
3. Mandate signage of recommended precautions when coming into contact with artificial turf.

Written
testimony
from 5/12/15
budget hearing

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
"Environmental Health Perspectives"
Environ Health Perspect. 2008 Mar; 116(3): A116–A122.

PMCID: PMC2265067

Environews

Focus

Synthetic Turf: Health Debate Takes Root

This article has been other articles in PMC.

In Little League dugouts, community parks, professional athletic organizations, and international soccer leagues, on college campuses and neighborhood playgrounds, even in residential yards, the question being asked is "grass or plastic?" The debate is over synthetic turf, used to blanket lawns, park spaces, and athletic fields where children and adults relax and play; the questions are whether synthetic turf is safe for human and environmental health, and whether its advantages outweigh those of natural grass. Despite or perhaps because of the fact that it is too early to definitively answer those questions, the debate is fierce.

New York City, which buys the largest amount of synthetic turf of any U.S. municipality, held a hearing 13 December 2007 on the use of synthetic turf in city parks. There is a clear need for open space in the city. The 28,700 acres of land constituting some 4,000 parks are distributed unevenly throughout the city. "Many districts have no green parks, not even one," said Helen Sears, a city council member representing the Jackson Heights neighborhood, during the hearing.

New York City Department of Parks & Recreation commissioner Adrian Benepe wants to address the need for parks and athletic fields by installing not only natural grass fields and lawns but also synthetic turf. "With quality recreational facilities—which means, in some cases, synthetic turf fields—we will be able to better confront this issue," he says. In New York City, he points out, at least 35 synthetic turf fields are or will be a replacement for asphalt surfaces.

Others oppose the move toward synthetic turf. "Grassroots organizations have been working hard to have pesticide use reduced or banned in places where it is unnecessary," says Tanya Murphy, a board member of Healthy Child, Healthy World, an advocacy organization. "Now we're going from the frying pan and into the fire when replacing grass with synthetic turf."

The debate leaves many on the fence. Orlando Gil, an assistant research scientist at New York University and soccer coach, is weighing both alternatives: "We want children to play outside, exercise, and play sports, but with pesticides and fertilizers in grass and chemicals in artificial turf, I don't know which to choose."

Indeed, a dearth of research on the nonoccupational human health effects of exposure to the constituents of synthetic turf hampers the ability to make that choice with any degree of confidence. On the basis of limited toxicity data, some reports have concluded the health risks are minimal. Most agree, however, that far more research is needed before the question can be

Submitted by
Megan Braganca 443-546-3879

definitively answered. In the 13 December 2007 issue of *Rachel's Democracy and Health News*, William Crain of the City College of New York Psychology Department and Junfeng Zhang of the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey School of Public Health called conclusions of minimal risk "premature."

A Turf History

During the 1950s, the Ford Foundation studied ways to incorporate physical fitness into the lives of young people, particularly in cities where outdoor play areas were scarce. Ford joined Monsanto Industries to create an artificial surface on which children could play sports. In 1964 the first artificial playing surface was marketed under the name Chemgrass.

Meanwhile, the first domed stadium was being built in Houston, Texas. The Astrodome, with its retractable translucent plastic ceiling, let in enough sunshine to maintain a natural grass field. But after the first baseball season, it was clear there was a problem. The plastic panes produced a glare that made it difficult for players to see the ball. This problem was solved by painting the panes black—but then the grass began to die from lack of sunlight. By the beginning of the second season, the Astros were playing on dead grass and painted dirt. At this time, production of Chemgrass was limited, but what little was available was installed in the Astrodome. By the end of the 1966 season, the material had been renamed AstroTurf. The green nylon carpet was a success.

The popularity of AstroTurf grew steadily during the 1970s and 1980s, with most of its use in professional sports arenas. However, a backlash began to unfold when players started to complain about the surfacing. The English Football Association banned synthetic turf in 1988, mainly because of complaints from athletes that it was harder than grass and caused more injuries. Similar concerns were growing in the United States. A poll conducted by the National Football League Players Association in 1995 showed that more than 93% of players believed playing on artificial surfaces increased their chances of injury. This sentiment was famously expressed by baseball player Dick Allen: "If a horse won't eat it, I don't want to play on it."

The movement against AstroTurf gained traction, and many ballparks were converted to natural grass during the 1990s. One example was Giants Stadium in New Jersey, which had used AstroTurf since its construction in 1976. The stadium was refitted with a system of 6,000 removable trays of natural grass. Even the new stadium in Houston, built to replace the original Astrodome, was surfaced with grass.

In this story of grass, the balance is tilting once more against the natural kind. Natural grass, under some circumstances, cannot consistently withstand the demands of sports where a lot of running is involved. Parallel to this back-and-forth controversy over which is best have come new developments in the manufacture of synthetic turf. Several companies, including the makers of the original AstroTurf, have come on the market with new playing surfaces.

FieldTurf, for example, is made of a blended polyethylene–polypropylene material woven to simulate blades of grass. The “grass” is held upright and given some cushioning by adding a layer of infill made of recycled tires, rubber particles 3 mm in diameter or smaller. This crumb rubber infill is sometimes mixed with silica sand. Many stadiums that switched to grass from AstroTurf have since switched back to FieldTurf-style synthetic turf.

Figures from the Synthetic Turf Council, a trade organization based in Atlanta, show that 10 years ago there were 7 new-generation fields installed in the United States. Today there are 3,500. Says Geoffrey Croft, president of the nonprofit New York City Parks Advocates, which promotes public funding and increased park services, “There are millions of square feet of synthetic turf already installed on fields around the country, and not one environmental impact statement has been issued.”

Human Health Questions

Given the relatively recent development of new-generation synthetic turf, there are unanswered questions regarding its potential effects on health and the environment, with the rubber infill one of the main sources of concern. The crumbs become airborne and can be breathed in and tracked into homes on clothes and athletic gear. There are also questions about dermal and ingestional exposures, and about ecosystem effects.

For athletes, the little black rubber pellets may seem little more than a nuisance. Others express more concern, especially when it comes to children’s exposure to the infill. Patti Wood, executive director of the nonprofit Grassroots Environmental Education, argues, “This crumb rubber is a material that cannot be legally disposed of in landfills or ocean-dumped because of its toxicity. Why on earth should we let our children play on it?”

Recycled crumb rubber contains a number of chemicals that are known or suspected to cause health effects. The most common types of synthetic rubber used in tires are composed of ethylene–propylene and styrene–butadiene combined with vulcanizing agents, fillers, plasticizers, and antioxidants in different quantities, depending on the manufacturer. Tire rubber also contains polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), phthalates, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

According to the Rubber Manufacturers Association, only 8 states have no restrictions on placing tires in landfills. Most of these restrictions have to do with preventing pest problems and tire fires, which release toxicants such as arsenic, cadmium, lead, nickel, PAHs, and VOCs.

Some studies suggest that the same chemicals that can be released profusely during a tire fire may also be released slowly during deterioration of crumb rubber. For instance, researchers at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health presented a report at the 2006 meeting of the International Association for Sports Surface Sciences on turf-related chemicals in indoor stadiums. The report, *Artificial Turf Pitches: An Assessment of the Health Risks for Football Players*, showed that VOCs from rubber infill can be aerosolized into respirable form during

sports play. The authors calculated health risk assuming the use of recycled rubber granulate, which releases the lowest amounts of these chemicals of any type of rubber infill.

The report concluded that, given current knowledge, the use of synthetic turf indoors does not cause any elevated health risk, even in vulnerable populations such as children. However, the report continues, "It should also be noted that little or no toxicological information is available for many of the volatile organic compounds which have been demonstrated as being present in the air in the [indoor stadiums]. . . . [Furthermore], not all organic compounds in the [stadium] air have been identified." In particular the report called for more information regarding the development of asthma and airway allergies in response to exposure to the latex in many tires.

Similarly, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), in the January 2007 report *Evaluation of Health Effects of Recycled Waste Tires in Playground and Track Products*, concluded that 49 chemicals could be released from tire crumbs. Based on an experiment simulating gastric digestion, the OEHHA calculated a cancer risk of 1.2 in 10 million assuming a one-time ingestion over a lifetime—well below the 1 in 1 million *di minimis* risk threshold. In a hand-wipe experiment, the OEHHA calculated an increased cancer risk of 2.9 in 1 million for ingestion of chrysene (a suspected human carcinogen found in tire rubber) via hand-to-mouth contact with crumb rubber infill. This estimate assumed regular playground use for the first 12 years of life and was termed by the authors to be "slightly higher" than the *di minimis* level.

In the summer of 2007, Environment and Human Health, Inc. (EHHI), a nonprofit organization headquartered in North Haven, Connecticut, commissioned a study from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station to determine whether toxic compounds from crumb rubber could be released into air or water. The report *Artificial Turf* describes identifying 25 chemical species with 72–99% certainty using mass spectrometry–gas chromatography. Among those definitively confirmed were the irritants benzothiazole and *n*-hexadecane; butylated hydroxyanisole, a carcinogen and suspected endocrine disruptor; and 4-(*t*-octyl) phenol, a corrosive that can be injurious to mucous membranes.

The Synthetic Turf Council said in a statement issued on 13 December 2007 that "Claims of toxicity [in the EHHI report] are based on extreme laboratory testing such as the use of solvents and high temperatures to generate pollutants." But the EHHI stands by its studies. *Artificial Turf* author David Brown, EHHI's director of public health toxicology, says, "It is clear the recycled rubber crumbs are not inert, nor is a high temperature or severe solvent extraction needed to release metals, volatile, or semi-volatile organic compounds." Brown asserts that the laboratory tests approximate conditions that can be found on the field, and that no solvent besides water was used.

According to Brown, the basic barrier to accurately assessing the safety of recycled tire rubber is the high variability in tire construction and the lack of chemical characterization of the crumb rubber. "Very few samples have been tested," he says. "There is no study with sufficient sample sizes to determine the potential hazard." He adds, "Since new tires contain vastly different amounts of the toxic materials, based on the intended use, it is impossible to ensure players or gardeners and others that their personal exposure is within safe limits."

Another debated health issue is that of injuries. Several studies published in a supplement to the August 2007 issue of the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* reported no differences in the incidence, severity, nature, or cause of injuries in soccer teams who played on grass versus new-generation synthetic turf. However, injuries may depend on the type of sport being played. A five-year prospective study of football injuries among high school teams published 1 October 2004 in *The American Journal of Sports Medicine* showed that there were about 10% more injuries when games were played on synthetic turf than when played on grass surfaces. Conversely, the risk of serious head and knee injuries was greater on grass fields.

Injuries lead to another concern: infection with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), which is thought to spread especially easily among athletes because of repeated skin-to-skin contact, frequency of cuts and abrasions, and sharing of locker room space and equipment. A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and published in the 3 February 2005 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed that, although synthetic turf itself did not appear to harbor MRSA, the greater number of turf burns caused by the abrasive friction of this type of surface increased the probability of MRSA infection, especially among professional athletes playing on hard surfaces.

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that synthetic turf may harbor more bacteria. For example, an industry study sponsored by Sprinturf, a maker of synthetic turf, found that infill containing a sand/rubber mixture had 50,000 times higher levels of bacteria than infill made of rubber alone. To address this, the company markets synthetic turf that is "sand-free" as a safer alternative and offers sanitation for those fields already installed.

Proper maintenance of synthetic turf requires that the fields be sanitized to remove bodily fluids and animal droppings; manufacturers market sanitizing products for this purpose. According to *Synthetic Turf Sports Fields: A Construction and Maintenance Manual*, published in 2006 by the American Sports Builders Association, some synthetic turf owners disinfect their fields as often as twice a month, with more frequent cleanings for sideline areas, where contaminants concentrate.

Different Shades of Green

Cultivated natural grass carries plenty of environmental baggage. According to "Water Management on Turfgrass," a paper on the Texas A&M University Cooperative Extension website (), natural grass sports fields can require up to 1.5 million gallons of water per acre per year. The frequent mowing required for natural grass lawns and fields also results in emissions of hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide (up to 5% of such emissions in the United States, according to the Environmental Protection Agency).

Natural grass does offer tangible benefits, however. According to Turfgrass Producers International, these include increased pollution control, absorption of carbon dioxide, a cooling effect, water filtration, and prevention of soil erosion. There are also perhaps intangible benefits to a field of grass. Crain presents the idea that replacing grass with synthetic turf can hinder

children's creative play and affect their development. "Today's children largely grow up in synthetic, indoor environments," he says. "Now, with the growing popularity of synthetic turf fields, their experience with nature will be less than ever."

Adds Croft, "Although there is an important need for open spaces, the issue here is not open space but active recreational facilities. I don't see the connection between open space and installing synthetic turf fields."

Synthetic turf does offer certain advantages over natural grass. *A New Turf War: Synthetic Turf in New York City Parks*, a report released in 2006 by the advocacy group New Yorkers for Parks, points out, "Proponents of synthetic turf fields tout the reduction of allergy and asthma triggers. The removal of natural pollens and grasses may be beneficial to children and adults with these afflictions."

One of the main arguments used in favor of synthetic turf is that it can be installed relatively quickly and, once functional, can be used almost continuously. In contrast, grass fields need time to take root and must be closed periodically for proper maintenance. For example, the Central Park Conservancy, a private philanthropy that maintains New York City's Central Park, closes grass fields all winter; during the summer and spring, fields are closed on a rotating basis for restoration. Also, tackle football and cleated shoes are prohibited on all of the fields, and the fields are closed whenever it rains or they are wet. According to estimates from the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, synthetic fields can be open for use 28% more of the time in a year than natural grass fields because they can withstand heavy use, which the department estimates has doubled in the last eight years.

Lower cost for long-term maintenance is another argument that is made for synthetic turf, although the degree of the savings is disputed. It is generally agreed that installation costs of synthetic turf can be almost double those of natural grass. For instance, a synthetic turf soccer field can cost almost \$1.4 million compared with a natural grass field at about \$690,000. But when the costs are prorated over the expected lifespan of the field, including maintenance, the difference in cost narrows to less than \$15,000 more for the natural grass, according to *A New Turf War*.

Although some, like Benepe, consider this cost savings to be substantial, others consider it insignificant. As Christian DiPalermo, executive director of New Yorkers for Parks, puts it, "The amount of money saved is negligible considering the many unknowns about artificial turf."

One drawback that both fans and critics of synthetic turf agree on is that these fields can get much hotter than natural grass. Stuart Gaffin, an associate research scientist at the Center for Climate Systems Research at Columbia University, initially became involved with the temperature issues of synthetic turf fields while conducting studies for another project on the cooling benefits of urban trees and parks. Using thermal satellite images and geographic information systems, Gaffin noticed that a number of the hottest spots in the city turned out to be synthetic turf fields.

Direct temperature measurements conducted during site visits showed that synthetic turf fields can get up to 60° hotter than grass, with surface temperatures reaching 160°F on summer days. For example, on 6 July 2007, a day in which the atmospheric temperature was 78°F in the early afternoon, the temperature on a grass field that was receiving direct sunlight was 85°F while an adjacent synthetic turf field had heated to 140°F. "Exposures of ten minutes or longer to surface temperatures above 122°F can cause skin injuries, so this is a real concern," said Joel Forman, medical director of the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, speaking at a 6 December 2007 symposium on the issue.

Many physical properties of synthetic turf—including its dark pigments, low-density mass, and lack of ability to vaporize water and cool the surrounding air—make it particularly efficient at increasing its temperature when exposed to the sun. This is not only a hazard for users, but also can contribute to the "heat island effect," in which cities become hotter than surrounding areas because of heat absorbed by dark man-made surfaces such as roofs and asphalt. From many site visits to both black roofs and synthetic turf fields, Gaffin has concluded that the fields rival black roofs in their elevated surface temperatures.

Although it is often argued that one of the advantages of synthetic turf is that it does not need irrigation, some installations must be watered to control the excessive heat. Benepe stated in public hearings that water misters may have to be installed in some fields to help remedy the heat problem. According to Gaffin, synthetic turf is so efficient at absorbing sunlight, that cooling with water is only temporarily effective. "After a short while of watering, I expect the temperature should rebound and the surface become intolerably hot again," he says.

In addition to heat control, the International Hockey Federation requires that college teams saturate synthetic turf fields before each practice and game to increase traction, according to an article in the 19 October 2007 Raleigh (North Carolina) *News & Observer*. The article, which examined why local universities were watering their synthetic turf fields in the midst of severe ongoing drought in the U.S. Southeast, noted that Duke University received a business exemption to water the fields provided overall campus water consumption decreased by 30%.

storm water
The EHHI study addressed the question of whether synthetic turf fields can contribute to increased water contamination from rain or from spraying or misting. The study found that 25 different chemical species and 4 metals (zinc, selenium, lead, and cadmium) could be released into water from rubber infill. Moreover, because synthetic turf is unable to absorb or filter rain-water, chemicals filter directly into storm drains and into the municipal sewer system without the beneficial filtration that live vegetation provides. Benepe and others agree this can be an issue that New York City would need to address, as water runoff from synthetic turf fields could overwhelm storm drains, thus contributing to the estimated 27 billion gallons of raw sewage and stormwater that discharge from 460 combined sewer overflows into New York Harbor each year.

Finally, what happens to synthetic turf fields when they are no longer usable? Industry estimates that synthetic turf fields have a lifespan of 10 to 12 years, whereupon the material must be disposed of appropriately. Rick Doyle, president of the Synthetic Turf Council, says the infill could be cleaned and reused; put to another purpose, such as for rubber asphalt; incinerated; used

in place of soil to separate landfill layers; or otherwise recycled. Typically, however, it is landfilled.

Alternatives

One of the benefits of synthetic turf is that it can serve as a way to reuse old tires, a real problem given the 1 billion-plus tires that are sold every year. Doyle says the synthetic turf industry currently recycles one-twelfth of the 300 million auto tires that are withdrawn from use each year. The average soccer field can contain crumb rubber made from 27,000 tires at a density of about 4 to 15 pounds of infill per square foot.

Europe has launched an aggressive tire recovery campaign in which tires that meet quality criteria can be retreaded and reused. End-of-life tires that cannot be reused are recycled for other uses including some industrial energy-generating applications, the production of rubberized pavement, and recycling into materials for the car industry (in addition to some use in producing synthetic turf). In western Europe, recovery rates of used tires have increased from 65% in 2001 to almost 90% in 2005.

Whereas end-of-life tires add tons of waste a year for disposal in many areas, in Europe they are turning into a potentially lucrative secondary raw material. "There are increasingly numerous applications," says Serge Palard, head of the end-of-life tire recovery department at Michelin, one of the largest tire manufacturers in the world. "In some countries where we did not know what to do with end-of-life tires a few years ago, now we do not have enough to meet the demand of all the reprocessors."

In accordance with the European Union's recently implemented REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) regulations, which will require more testing of industrial chemicals, companies such as Michelin are working to reduce the use of harmful chemicals in tires in order to facilitate recycling into other products.

European companies are also finding innovative ways to address concerns regarding recycled tire infill in synthetic turf. In Italy, for example, there is an effort to market synthetic turf fields that feature infill made of a new thermoplastic material that is thought to be nontoxic. Mondo, a manufacturer of floor surfaces, produces Ecofill, a patented polyolefin-based granule used in synthetic turf. According to the company, this material disperses heat more efficiently; is highly shock absorbent; does not contain polyvinyl chloride, chlorine, plasticizers, heavy metals, or other harmful chemicals; and is 100% recyclable.

Another alternative is infill made from plant-derived materials. Synthetic turf manufacturer Limonta Sport produces Geo Safe Play, an infill made from coconut husks and cork. Company spokesperson Domenic Carapella says, "There are certainly alternatives to crumb rubber. There is no longer a reason to sacrifice the playing quality and more importantly the health of children [playing on synthetic turf]."

Why can't the alternative to bad grass fields simply be well-maintained grass fields, asks Croft. Certain varieties of turf grasses have been bred for resistance to stress, ability to withstand trampling and low water conditions, and other characteristics that make them appropriate for athletic field use.

But according to Doyle, increased maintenance is not the answer. "More maintenance cannot overcome overusage of a natural grass sports field," he says. "And overusage of a natural grass sports field or usage during a rainstorm or in months of dormancy will produce an unsafe playing surface." Adds Benepe, "Even the wealthiest professional sports teams and Ivy League universities have concluded that grass fields are a losing proposition for intense-use sports such as football or soccer. . . . There is also the reality that natural turf fields used for high-intensity sports must be replaced every few years, unless you severely restrict use."

For now, New York State Assembly-members Steve Englebright, William Colton, and David Koon have proposed legislation to impose a six-month moratorium on the installation of synthetic turf until the state health and conservation departments have better studied the pros and cons of natural and synthetic grass. Said Englebright in a 5 November 2007 statement, "Before we take risks with our children's health and drinking water quality, we need to make sure that the uncertainties . . . are fully investigated."

County Council Public Hearing: FY16 Capital and Operating Budget
Written Testimony of
PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC) on the FY16 HCPSS Operating Budget
Presented by: Christina Delmont-Small, President
May 12, 2015 @ 7pm

My name is Christina Delmont-Small and I'm the president of the PTA Council of Howard County. PTACHC represents all 74 Howard County PTAs and over 20,000 members.

I am here this evening to advance the overall purpose of PTA - to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTACHC urges the County Council to restore funding to the FY16 HCPSS Operating budget so that the budget that was passed by the Board of Education, and presented to the County Executive, is fully funded.

We hope you will continue the historic commitment to education that has been made by Howard County's elected officials and allocate funding that will enable the Howard County Public School System to provide the quality education our parents and community expect from our schools. We encourage both the County Council and County Executive to fully fund the Board of Education's budget request and financially support our schools so that they can provide the environment necessary for every student to achieve their personal best.

Good evening. My name is Julie Peterson and I am here as a representative of Grace Community Church in Fulton Maryland.

There are currently more than 300 Burmese Chin students enrolled in Howard County Public Schools, and that number has been growing at a rate of about 50 per year. Most Chin parents are new immigrants or refugees. Their own educational background is limited, and they struggle to understand our unfamiliar education system and how to help their own children succeed. The Chin International Achievement Liaison, currently a half-time position with Howard County Public Schools, is critical to the continued growth and success of Chin students.

At Grace Community Church, we have tried to help the Chin community in ways available to us. We meet regularly with church and community leaders. We provide furniture and clothing donations as needed, offer ESL and citizenship classes and mentor families.

What the Chin community needs most is the opportunity to succeed in this new environment. The best investment of resources is to help them acquire the skills and experience to grow, to support themselves, and to contribute productively to the broader community. Successful education is a critical piece that Howard County schools and government are uniquely positioned to provide. We appreciate the investment that the County has put into helping Chin students up to this point, and as the needs grow within our community, we hope that you will provide the funding to continue that support.

Testimony of Patricia Hatch May 12, 2015

In support of the .5 position for International Achievement Liaison

My name is Patricia Hatch, and I live at 9690 Basket Ring Road, Co

Pat Hatch
Refugee and Immigrant Ministry Director

Tonight I am speaking in support of the .5 position that is included in the HCPSS budget proposal for next year for an International Achievement Liaison for Burmese Chin students. I urge you to affirm, retain and protect funding for that vital position.

Some of you with long memories may recall that I had the privilege of serving as the first Director of FIRN – Foreign-born Information and Referral Network - in the 1980s and 1990s. After my 16 years at FIRN, I served in state government for 13 years, retiring in 2011 from my position as Manager of Programs in the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees at DHR. I currently serve as Refugee and Immigrant Ministry Director for a national denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America.

But before any of that, I was a school teacher - first in Buffalo, NY and then in Seoul, Korea - before my husband and I settled in Howard County. I was a stay-at-home Mom for nearly 10 years after our daughter and son were born. During those years, I volunteered with others from several Howard County congregations who had formed the Columbia Cooperative Ministry Refugee Resettlement partnership. During that time, I learned firsthand the overwhelming challenges faced by those who had never planned to leave their homeland, but had been forced to flee for their lives due to political upheaval and persecution on the basis of their religion, ethnicity or political opinions.

Anyone who starts life over in a new land can anticipate a multitude of challenges, as any immigrant will tell you. But that small subset of immigrants who come as refugees, in my opinion, have the roughest road to self-sufficiency. Why?

- First, they had had no chance to prepare for life in a new country, since they had not planned to leave their homeland
- Second, the events and experiences that forced them to leave have had a profound effect on their lives – They may have seen family members killed, tortured, or “disappeared” because of their religion, ethnicity, or political opinion. They themselves may have been jailed or tortured by those in power in their homeland for no other reason than who they are or what they believe. These experiences haunt them as they try to start life anew in the US.
- Third - unlike many immigrants who have been able to save funds toward their new start in the US - refugees usually arrive having lost everything. Many start life here with only the clothes they are wearing on arrival, and a plastic bag containing their medical records
- Although the US government provides some very bare bones short-term assistance to refugees, that transitional assistance ends after just a few months, so the recently-arrived refugee - still without language skills or a concept of their new community - often must work two to three entry-level jobs just to earn sufficient income to pay their rent and most basic expenses for the family

Burmese Chin families percentage of their students were Burmese Chin. By FY 2013 there were about 200 Burmese Chin students in HCPSS, and that number had grown to around 250 by the following year. This year, I understand that the numbers are well over 300, and as more Burmese refugee families arrive and additional children reach school age, the percentage of ESOL students from Burmese Chin households is likely to continue to increase.

What is unique about the Burmese Chin refugees?

- Many do not speak or read the national language, but rather speak the Hakha dialect, spoken by only a few hundred thousand people in the world; an even smaller group speak Zophei, a language spoken by fewer than 20,000 people in the world
- Most Burmese Chin adults have not had the opportunity to attend school beyond the elementary grades; they may be barely literate in their own dialect and speak and read no English
- Most Burmese were subsistence farmers
- Many Burmese lived for years in sparse, ill-equipped refugee camps in Malaysia, where food and medical care was scarce and there was little or no education available to school-age children
- Neither their experiences in their homeland nor their years in refugee camps have prepared Burmese refugees for life in a fast-paced culture in the US
- They have no idea what to expect of American schools, or what is expected of parents

These families need help to understand the educational opportunities in Howard County, to communicate with their children's teachers, and to learn how they can help their children.

After many requests from teachers and principals and some community advocacy, the HCPSS created a half-time Burmese Chin International Achievement Liaison who has been a tremendous help to the Burmese families. However, if these several hundred Burmese children – and their siblings and cousins soon to follow them into Howard County Schools – are to succeed, there is a critical need that this position be made full-time, as will happen if the half-time position which is included in the budget you are considering is retained and fully funded. It is extremely difficult for the school system to locate and hire a person who speaks both of these obscure languages if only a half-time position is offered. Other institutions – other school systems and health care facilities, for instance, are competing for the talents of the few multi-lingual individuals who speak English, Burmese, Hakha and Zophei.

please provide your full support for funding for this additional half-time International Achievement Liaison for the Burmese Chin students and their families, so that a qualified individual will be available full-time to help them navigate their way to full participation, academic success and community integration. Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony for County Council Budget Hearing
Brianna Lawton, Student Howard Community College
May 12, 2015, at 7 p.m.

Good evening, Howard County Council members.

My name is Brianna Lawton, and I am a resident of Columbia.

It is a pleasure to see you again, as I had the privilege of speaking to you at the Howard Community College legislative breakfast.

My journey to Howard Community College actually began at a four-year university. A proud graduate of Long Reach High School, I launched into my college experience without really knowing the cost and how I would afford it. I had picked my university after earning a merit scholarship, but my scholarship was cut back after just one year, and there was no way that I could continue at the high tuition rates.

I returned home looking for an affordable college that would have the same quality academics and found Howard Community College! I had long known of the college and had previously applied, but I am so thankful that I returned again!

As someone who is passionate about engineering, Howard Community College gave me the opportunity to get involved – and even lead – student clubs. HCC also gave me the opportunity to network and meet students, professors, and business leaders who share the same excitement about engineering. I also had the opportunity to explore different fields of engineering and to find the one that suited me best – civil engineering.

At HCC, I have benefited from interactive hands-on activities that enforce what I learn inside the classroom and enhance my skills in order to solve problems facing society.

While I have had a wonderful experience in the college's engineering program, I know that having a science, engineering, and technology building will provide access to even greater numbers of students, plus provide more spaces to learn and to develop collaborative mentoring relationships between students and their professors.

The SET building is a stepping stone for students as they pursue their engineering degrees. I know firsthand that being a STEM major is not easy, but the hard work and perseverance will pay off. And that goal keeps me going, knowing that no matter what I face.

I look forward to returning to the college in two years to celebrate my graduation from my transfer university and to celebrate the new building that will inspire future generations of engineers – just like me – to get there from here.

Testimony for County Council Budget Hearing

Edmund "Skip" Coale, III, Chair

Howard Community College Board of Trustees

May 12, 2015, at 7 p.m.

Good evening. I am Edmund Coale, III, chair of the Howard Community College Board of Trustees, and a resident of Highland.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you tonight in support of Howard Community College, its students and employees, and its fiscal year 2016 capital budget.

I am so proud to serve our county as chair of the Howard Community College Board because I have seen firsthand the transformative effect the college has had in the lives of so many in our community.

As Dr. Hetherington so eloquently puts it, "for many people, community colleges are the first choice for a college education.

But community colleges are also the place where people get that rarest of things – a second chance.”

For that reason, I honestly believe that – as the local economy works to regain its footing – your investment in Howard Community College, *our community college*, is the best investment you can make.

Despite our enrollment growth – our budget funding has not seen the same robust growth. So our needs for fiscal year 2016 are straightforward: With new students, we need people to educate them, and we need facilities in which to teach.

We need **state-of-the-art facilities** that will guarantee our students can move seamlessly into the workplace or transfer smoothly to a four-year university program. While HCC continues to have a space deficit, we must do what we can to respond with critical facilities for future HCC students. We ask

for the County Council's support on the following recommendations of the County Executive:

- \$16 million in county funds to complete construction of the science, engineering, and technology building, which would match state funding.
- \$913,000 in county funds for the final design funding to renovate the current Nursing Building and the current Science and Technology Building. Renovating existing buildings will provide critically important instructional and support space.
- Also, we request \$7.7 million in bond funding that the college will repay through student tuition funds to expand our East Parking Garage by 750 spaces. If you visit during the week, you have experienced firsthand the challenges of parking on campus. We have instituted parking shuttles to try and alleviate the parking problems, but expanding the garage is critical to ensuring access to the campus.

We recognize that the County Executive did not recommend our entire capital budget, but your support of what he has proposed will assist in meeting our major priorities.

As stewards of the county's resources, we know that you want to ensure that the dollars are wisely invested in ways that work. Howard Community College and its board of trustees will ensure that your investment continues to pay off for the residents, businesses, and government of Howard County.

Thank you for your past support and for continuing to provide pathways to success at Howard Community College.

Testimony for County Council Budget Hearing
Kate Hetherington, President, Howard Community College
May 12, 2015, at 7 p.m.

Good evening, members of the County Council. I am Dr. Kate Hetherington, president of Howard Community College, and a resident of Columbia.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the faculty, staff, and 30,000 credit and noncredit students of Howard Community College. I am joined by our faculty and staff tonight, and would like them to stand and be recognized for their commitment to HCC students.

I am so proud of the work of our faculty and staff in providing students with pathways to success. Over the last 10 years, we have seen more and more residents choose Howard Community College, and we continue to show enrollment consistency. Between fall 2004 to fall 2014, our enrollment headcount has jumped by 51 percent – that's 3,473 more students in our

classrooms and depending on our services. Consider this: The University of Baltimore has an undergraduate enrollment of 3,485. We have literally grown the equivalent of a university in one decade. And over the next ten years, we anticipate growing by 28 percent.

We are educating, retraining, and supporting recent high school graduates, local business employees, career changers, veterans, and residents of all ages. While we have had a significant increase in students, the funding needed to support these students has not kept pace with our enrollment growth.

Just this year, we experienced a mid-year operating budget cut of just over \$698,000 from the state of Maryland.

As a result, we have taken steps to reduce our costs by:

- Slowing our hiring process, and in some cases, freezing vacant positions.
- Cutting back on contracted services.

- Reducing and – in some cases – restricting travel, which limits professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.
- Reallocating funding to cover essential maintenance of equipment.
- And even postponing the purchase of necessary equipment despite having original equipment well past its prime.

In addition, our employee workloads have increased significantly with additional job responsibilities for salaried employees who do not receive overtime pay. Even with increased workload, we still cannot always provide services and support to our students at the levels they deserve because of lack of staff.

In spite of these challenges, we have accomplished a dramatic increase in completion. The number of students earning degrees and certificates increased more than 60 percent over the past five years. In just one week, I look forward to seeing many of you at our commencement. This year we will graduate the largest

class in the college's history, 1,197 students, achieving 1,270 degrees and/or certificates.

This growth in enrollment and completion at HCC has resulted in a stronger, more vibrant Howard County. For instance:

- For every dollar the county invests in the college, taxpayers see an 11.3 percent return on the investment.
- Also, the Howard County economy receives approximately \$55.8 million in income each year thanks to the college and its students.

Despite these successes, the state will provide the college with just \$250,000 more in operating funds when compared to this time last year. The statewide funding formula calls for \$820,000 more, but the state's Budget Reconciliation and Finance Act has kept the community colleges from receiving budget parity.

We are grateful for everything our state and our county legislators have done and continue to do to support high quality, higher education within Howard County.

Prior to submitting our budget request, we first asked faculty and staff to examine opportunities to save money and reallocate funds before making any new requests. This year, as part of that process, we reallocated more than \$1.7 million.

Even after this reallocation, the college originally requested a nine percent increase from the county. However, the County Executive did not recommend an increase. His budget proposal calls for flat funding.

The college has reduced its request from 11 positions to just one-and-a-half new positions. Those positions are essential: a full-time faculty member in our new dental hygiene program to ensure we meet accreditation requirements, and a half- position to replace a previously funded grant position.

While we continue to do more with less, we cannot forget the importance of supporting and recognizing the dedication of our employees who make educating our students possible.

Therefore, our budget includes a small one-and-a-half percent salary increase to recognize our faculty and staff. No cost of living adjustments and no step increases are given to HCC employees. All salary increases are based on merit performance. To make this small increase possible, we propose delaying the salary adjustments until September to ensure that we will have the funding necessary to cover costs. So the one-and-a-half percent increase is really a one-and-a-quarter percent increase because of the delay until September.

The budget also includes a pay increase for adjunct faculty. Our original budget request called for an increase of \$35 per credit hour, but we have reduced our request to \$10 per credit hour. This would mark the third consecutive year for an adjunct faculty salary increase, but the pay rate remains below Prince George's Community College – our partner institution at the Laurel College Center.

Tuition increases will be necessary to close our funding shortfall. Our fiscal year 2016 operating budget now contains a \$5 tuition increase that would take the in-county resident tuition rate to \$132 per credit hour, representing a four percent increase. It was a hard decision for the college, but we did so knowing that we still remain the most affordable education option for Howard County residents and we will do everything possible to assist students with financial aid and scholarship support.

We know that the County Council cannot increase our operating budget above what the County Executive has put in his budget. Our students, faculty and staff are truly appreciative of the county's support over the years.

Investing in Howard Community College is an investment in the local workforce and in the future of Howard County. Please continue to support our students on their pathways to success.

Thank you.



Renee A. Foose, Ed. D.
Superintendent
410-313-6674

Superintendent's Testimony
Howard County Council Budget Hearing – Tuesday, May 12, 2015, 7 p.m.

Good evening, Chairperson Sigaty and members of the Council.

The school system greatly appreciates the County Executive's proposed budget funding and the historically strong support we have received from both the Executive and County Council. Howard County public schools continue to set a standard for excellence in our state and nation. But much work remains to ensure that every child who enters our school system graduates well prepared for college or a living-wage career.

Our student population is growing rapidly, both in numbers and diversity. Enrollment is projected to increase significantly next year, and to continue to rise for several years. Rapid growth brings significant added costs, which are not included in Maintenance of Effort funding.

Increasing numbers of students struggle with significant challenges that interfere with learning. Nearly 1 in 5 lives in poverty. The future of these children – and that of our entire county – depends on our success in preparing them with the skills to build a prosperous life. Funding is needed for the additional staffing and specialized services that help these students thrive.

Vision 2018, our system's strategic plan, inspires our work in building a world class educational program that fulfills the promise of preparation for every child. The budget includes funding to build on innovative programs, such as our new model for elementary education and K-12 world language instruction, which expand every child's potential to learn and grow. These initiatives are already delivering positive results in raising levels of engagement and achievement for all students, and narrowing our achievement gaps.

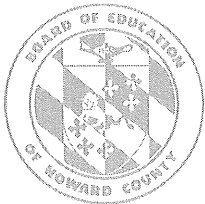
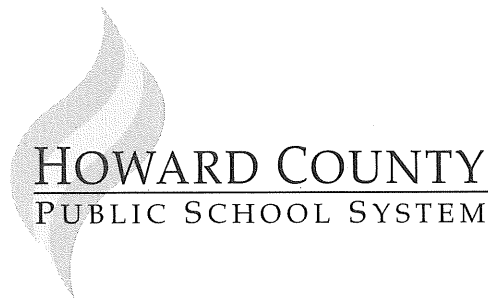
The skill and commitment of top-notch teachers and staff are at the heart of our system's success. Continued progress depends upon maintaining and attracting highly qualified employees. The FY16 budget includes funding to cover the salary increases agreed upon in the FY15 arbitration process, and additional funding to cover rising employee pension and health costs.

Our system is committed to sustaining our current high standards of educational excellence while ensuring fiscal responsibility to our county. We have adopted long-term, cost-saving measures and process improvements that have already shown impressive results and will deliver even greater returns in the FY 2016 budget cycle and through upcoming years.

The quality of our school system reflects the steadfast support of our community and county leaders. Thank you for your strong personal commitment to our schools and students. We look forward to working with you to ensure that our system has the resources necessary to provide a world-class education for every Howard County child.



Renee A. Foose, Ed. D.
Superintendent



Board of Education of Howard County

Janet Siddiqui, M.D.
Chairman

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Vice Chairman

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Sandra H. French

Ellen Flynn Giles

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Patrick B. Mikulis
Student Member

Renee A. Foose, Ed.D.
*Superintendent
Secretary/Treasurer*

Board of Education of Howard County Testimony Howard County Council Budget Hearing – Tuesday, May 12, 2015, 7 p.m.

Good evening, Chairperson Sigaty and members of the Council. As Chairman of the Board of Education, I appreciate this opportunity to represent the Board and the school system, and to advocate for the county's 53,000 public school students.

The success of our public schools is closely linked to our county's prosperity. A large and growing proportion of our county population faces poverty and other challenges that impede a child's prospects for lifelong success. Strategic investments in education give every child an opportunity to thrive, and enhance the long term outlook for our entire county.

Student enrollment is steadily rising in step with our county's rapid growth. The expected influx of hundreds of new students adds significant costs to our operating budget that are not included in Maintenance of Effort funding, which is based on prior year enrollment.

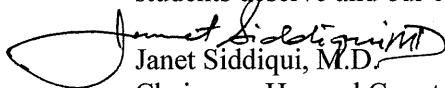
A large proportion of our budget increase reflects rising health and pension costs, as well as \$11.5 million for salary increases negotiated in FY15.

We have positioned the system well financially over the past several years, and maintain one of the leanest operations among Maryland school systems. But we continue to streamline operations so that the greatest possible proportion of our budget directly supports teaching and learning. Zero-Based Budgeting was adopted in FY15 and continues to drive improved operations and significant reductions to our bottom line.

To offset our budget increase, we have reallocated existing positions to accommodate growing enrollment without a corresponding increase in student-teacher ratios, which are an important factor to student achievement. We have proactively offered an early retirement program that is expected to deliver millions of dollars in savings over the next several years. And while participation levels for our benefits plans continue to rise, our per-member claims cost is among the lowest in Maryland.

Regarding the FY16 Capital Budget, the Board's request will provide for adequate facilities to serve the growing population along the Route 1 corridor and in downtown Columbia, and to renovate aging school buildings that urgently require upgrade. The Board of Education understands the budgetary pressures facing our local government. We look forward to working with county leaders to find solutions that meet our most urgent capital needs, while maintaining responsible fiscal stewardship to our community.

I want to thank you for sharing our commitment to building the world class school system that fulfills the promise of preparation for every Howard County student. We look forward to our continued collaboration in maintaining the quality education that our students deserve and our community expects.



Janet Siddiqui, M.D.

Chairman, Howard County Board of Education

Howard County Council's Budget Hearing
May 12, 2015

Testimony in support of Howard County Library System

Ann Gilligan

Chief Operating Officer, Howard County Library System

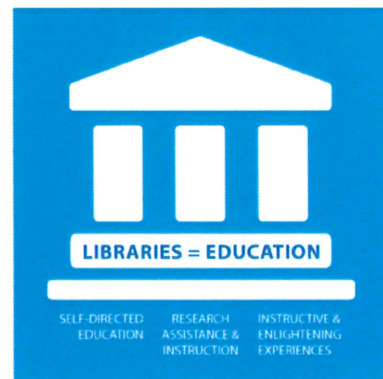


Good evening. I am Ann Gilligan, Chief Operating Officer of Howard County Library System. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of Howard County Library System, and also Howard County's 300,000 residents.

First, we express our gratitude for the many ways you support Howard County Library System—which this year celebrates its 75th Diamond Anniversary! We credit you for our continued distinguished status as a model 21st century educational institution. Thank you for recognizing that a strong investment in *public education for everyone* is a strong investment in our community's future.

We appreciate that the County Executive's proposed FY 16 Operating Budget includes flat level County funding. Our commitment to you and to this community is to deliver the best curriculum possible with the funding we receive under each of our Three Pillars: Self-Directed Education, Research Assistance & Instruction, and Instructive & Enlightening Experiences.

Our statistics continue to astound. Students of all ages visited our six branches **3 million times** last year to borrow **7 million items**—the highest per capita borrowing rate in the state. **Two million** people received expert research assistance, and more than **a quarter of a million** students of all ages attended our classes and events—like What's In My Artbox? for toddlers; Teen Time and Homework Clubs, as well as HCLS Project Literacy, our adult basic education program where our instructors teach 400 students English and basic math, and prepare them to pass U.S. citizenship tests, and to graduate with a GED.



At HiTech, our STEM education initiative for teens, attendance has reached 5,000. We plan to pilot extending HiTech to adult students this coming year, beginning with an introduction to 3D printing this fall.

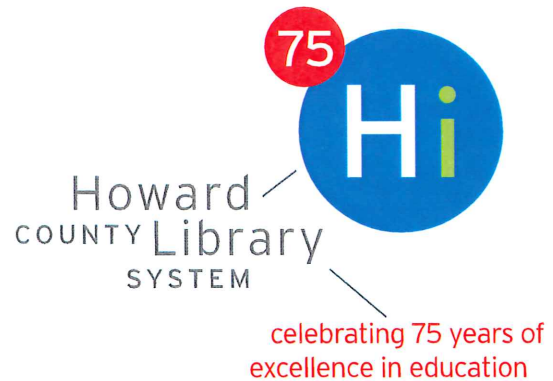
A few concluding highlights, we thank our A+ Partners for collaborating with us to present the HCLS Spelling Bee and its BumbleBee companion. More than 500 fourth and fifth graders have enrolled in the Rube Goldberg Challenge (the assignment this year is to build a wacky machine that crushes and recycles an empty soft drink can). And, as a number of you recently experienced, Battle of the Books comprised 240 teams (that's 1,200 students—one third of all Howard County fifth graders! Taking a 50-question exam on 16 pre-assigned books, students competed for best score, best costume, best team name, best team spirit, and best civility. .

Education is more important than ever in this knowledge-based economy. Howard County Library System represents less than two percent of the County's budget—a *smart* investment for a great return.

I urge you to fully fund the County Executive's proposed FY 16 Operating Budget for the Library System, and also his proposed Capital Budget. Thank you for your trust in us, and for the many ways you demonstrate your support. We look forward to providing you with more details at our work session.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann T. Gilligan
Ann T. Gilligan



Howard County Council's Budget Hearing
May 12, 2015

Testimony in support of Howard County Library System

Bruce I. Rothschild

Chair, Howard County Library System Board of Trustees

Good evening. I am Bruce Rothschild, Chair of the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees. On behalf of the entire Board, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Library System.

As strong advocates for education, you know that education promotes economic development and contributes to our county's reputation for excellence. The Board is proud that Howard County Library System continues to receive accolades for its mission to deliver high-quality public education for all.

While Ann Gilligan will focus on our FY 16 Operating Budget, I will summarize our proposed capital project.

We have requested funding in FY 16 to begin the schematic design for a new Elkrige Branch. With the third largest population district in Howard County, Elkrige requires an expanded branch to accommodate expected continued growth. At the community sessions held in 2013, Elkrige residents spoke passionately about the need for a new, larger library branch that will offer more classroom and community space, feature updated technology, and include space for an expanded collection. This new Elkrige Branch will serve as an educational hub for students of all ages, and residents eagerly await the groundbreaking for this new education center for their community.

Investing in this capital project continues to remedy Howard County Library System's space deficits based on industry standards and Howard County's growing population, especially in the eastern part of the county. Equally important, the investment further elevates the County's reputation for world-class education.

We recognize the challenges the County is facing, and we look forward to discussing these projects with you at the work session.

Thank you for considering our request, and for the many ways you demonstrate your support.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce I. Rothschild'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce I. Rothschild

County Council Budget Hearing for FY16

Wednesday, 29 March 2015 | 7:30pm

**Testimony by Jill Marie Bussey, President of the Board of Directors
for FIRN, Inc. (5999 Harpers Farm Rd., Suite E-200, Columbia, MD)**

Phone: 240-353-5208 | Email: jillmbussey@gmail.com

Good evening, members of the County Council! Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I am Jill Marie Bussey, and I am the President of the Board of Directors for FIRN. I have served on the Board since 2008 and have lived in the County for over thirteen years.¹ I am here with our Board, team, clients and friends [please stand] to THANK YOU for your support and your contributions during Howard County Celebrates New Americans, the Special Naturalization Ceremony that was held right here on April 18th! It was truly a wonderful celebration of citizenship - not just for the 50 new US citizens and their families, but for our entire community. We also thank you for your support and contributions to our Ribbon Cutting in January and taking the time to listen to how FIRN is growing to better meet the needs of our immigrant neighbors.

We are very grateful for the County's past support - support that has contributed significantly to FIRN's growth and the successful integration of our foreign-born neighbors.

I am here on behalf of the Board tonight to support the FY16 funding

¹ My residential address is 5257 Open Window, Columbia, MD 20144.

² Data from U.S. Census Bureau's pooled 2009-2013 American Community Surveys.

proposal for FIRN - funding that is critically needed for FIRN and our foreign-born community so that it does not lose ground so recently gained. As you heard during our Ribbon Cutting ceremony, our testimony before the Executive and tonight, FIRN has been a good steward of the funding received last year – it expanded its offices, doubled its staff, and enhanced its technology to more efficiently and effectively address the unique needs of our growing and diverse immigrant population. FIRN now requires the proposed funding to maintain these critical improvements and to continue to support the great community that warmly welcomes and receives our new neighbors.

I believe you are well aware of our demographics - current census data indicates that nearly twenty percent (20%) of the County's residents are foreign-born.² Our rich cultural and ethnic diversity is a tremendous asset to our County. As we saw on Sunday at the South American CultureFest held at the Miller Branch Library – our community is enriched and enhanced by our international awareness, global perspective, and celebration of culture. Thanks to the Library, CA and the Community College – Howard County residents were able to “travel” to 10 countries in a single afternoon! As we have been for the past five festivals, FIRN was there to celebrate and to provide education about the services we provide and volunteer opportunities. We were also able to share more about the inspiring lives and work of this year's American Success Award recipients – immigrants who have achieved success in their professions and have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to service.

² Data from U.S. Census Bureau's pooled 2009-2013 American Community Surveys.

One would think that with the festivals, ceremonies, galas and ribbon cuttings that is all that FIRN does. The truth is the day-to-day work that is not so public is what is most important to our residents in need – parents who are struggling to meet the basic needs of their families, children like Brayan (who testified before the County Executive) who have just been reunited with their mothers but are facing unthinkable uncertainty in the Immigration Courts, families that would not have a holiday meal if it weren't for FIRN and our gracious partners. I note that children like Brayan continue to flee unimaginable violence and poverty in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala – we expect another surge of children to seek refuge and reunification with their families this summer.

For all of these reasons, it is important for FIRN to continue to build capacity to address the changing needs of our community. In summary, I request that you approve the CSP funding recommendations for FIRN as a critical and unique human services organization in our County. We would, of course, also be very grateful if there was any opportunity for the Council to increase the current proposal.

**The County's investment in the foreign-born now is a great
investment in Howard County's future!
Thank you for your time and consideration.**



As of
6:50 PM

Howard County Council Testimony Signups

Public Hearing - Capital Budget FY2016 - 4/16/2015

	First Name	Last Name	Address	Stance	Received
1	Jean	Sedlacko	9114 NORTHFIELD RD, Ellicott City, 21042 <u>Phone Number:</u> 301-613-7574 <u>Email:</u> jsedlacko@verizon.net	For	4/14/2015 9:18 PM
2	Ted	Markle	6281 Amherst Ave, Columbia, 21046 <u>Phone Number:</u> 410-730-3931 <u>Email:</u> tedmarkle@comcast.net	Against	4/14/2015 9:27 PM
3	Fred	Gottemoeller	5425 VANTAGE POINT RD, Columbia, 21044 <u>Phone Number:</u> 443-285-1513 <u>Email:</u> fred.gottemoeller@bridgescape.net Speaking For A Group: Friends of Bridge Columbia - 5425 Vantage Point Road	For	4/16/2015 11:19 AM
4	Chris	Bloor	8041 MURPHY RD, Fulton, 20759 <u>Phone Number:</u> 4108885343 <u>Email:</u> chris.bloor@med.ge.com	Undeclared	4/16/2015 3:26 PM

Written
testimony
from 4/16/15
budget hearing



Testimony of Friends of Bridge Columbia

Howard County Council FY 2016 Capital Budget Hearing

April 16, 2016

Good evening. My name is Fred Gottemoeller. I am representing the Friends of Bridge Columbia. I am a resident of Town Center, a former resident of Oakland Mills, and a bridge architect and engineer.

First of all, we would like to thank you for the resolution congratulating us for being named Volunteers of the Year by the Oakland Mills Village Board. We have been working toward the creation of Bridge Columbia for 7 years now. That recognition is very gratifying.

Here is an important point about Bridge Columbia: it is more than just an Oakland Mills project. When most people think of Bridge Columbia they picture the existing pedestrian bridge or the possible new bridge we have sketched. But "bridge" is also a verb. "To bridge" means "to connect" separated places or separated people. To us, "Bridge Columbia" means to bring together East Columbia and West Columbia. That is one reason why the Town Center Village Board and other village boards support the project.

Pattie Laidig, the recently retired village manager for Town Center, got it. Last spring, when the county's bridge feasibility study started, it was called the Oakland Mills Bridge study. At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee Patti insisted that the name be changed. A bridge has two ends, she said. We want our name on it, too. So, the study is now called the Downtown Columbia Bridge Study. The Harper's Choice Village Board gets it, too. We just received a letter from them indicating their strong support.

We are glad to see that the administration is moving ahead with the project using the \$530,000 balance from the 2013 appropriation. Please urge the executive to spend that money on the planning and engineering necessary to obtain Federal or state grants for construction. There is no need to spend money on cameras, lighting or paint. The cameras are already there; the important part of the lighting will be installed as part of the Blandair trail improvements; and the benefits of paint will be gone in a few years. We're much better off now working toward a permanent solution by laying the groundwork for a successful construction grant.

Testimony of Friends of Bridge Columbia
Howard County Council FY 2016 Capital Budget Hearing
April 16, 2016

We also ask you to support the \$750,000 proposed for next year's budget. We will need it then to finish the engineering so that we can start construction in 2018. If we get moving now this bridge could be dedicated and in use in four years.

You know, Bridge Columbia was a good idea when we started this project 7 years ago. It is a much better idea today. It will give Columbia and Howard County sustainable, flexible and more vibrant transportation that meets the needs of Millennials, seniors and many others.

Contact:

Fred Gottemoeller

fred.gottemoeller@bridgescape.net

410-740-0256

For more information: www.bridgecolumbia.org

Ted Markle 6281 Amherst Ave. Columbia, MD 21046

SUBJECT: T7107

Downtown Patuxent Branch trail Extension

This testimony concerns the downtown Columbia Patuxent Branch Trail Extension. This path would run along the Little Patuxent River from Downtown Columbia through the Allview neighborhood. 160 Allview residents have signed a petition opposing this path because of the extreme flash floods.

The Little Patuxent river drains Columbia including the mall area resulting in a huge amounts of runoff during storms. Attached is a photo of a flash flood behind my house with 6 feet of water in my yard. The dotted red line is where the path would be. No one could possibly walk, bike, or swim in this flood (Attachment 1-3).

The proposed path begins south of downtown Columbia and only goes about 200 yards before it crosses under the Route 29 bridge. The Route 29 bridge underpass is by far the most dangerous part of the path because it is only 18 feet wide and the water level is only 2 feet below the bank. Attached is a picture of the Route 29 Bridge underpass that was flooded on April 30, 2014 (see Attachment 4). This picture was taken during the middle of the storm. The proposed path is going under this bridge. At the height of the storm the water was up to the top of the bridge. I couldn't even get to the high side of the bank to take a picture. However, I did take a picture of the water on Route 29 (Attachment 5). Also, the distance between the Route 29 bridge to the ground is only 7 feet which is inadequate. The National Association of DOT's (ASSHTO) requires a 10 foot vertical clearance for a 10 foot path under a bridge.

Most of the bike path would be very close to the river. The most dangerous flooding area, which is the Route 29 underpass and Allview is blocked off with gates limiting access; however, there have been several incidences by the river. A few years 2 kids trapped in a tree had to be rescued by the fire department because of a flash flood from the river in an area where the proposed path would run. Also, Allview residents have seen deer drown in the flood waters.

Some people say, well, we will get just out of the way of the flood water. The problem is that people walking or riding their bikes, 1 mile, or 5 miles downstream will try to make it home in the rain. In only a few minutes the river could rise over its bank several feet. The result would be disastrous for people using the path especially trying to cross under Route 29 bridge during a flash flood.

Some of the path would run through special protected wetlands with signs posting "WETLANDS PROTECTION AREA" Caution. This area is a fragile plant and animal habitat, please help us protect this natural resource, DO NOT DISTURB. If a path were built through this area, the area would be negatively impacted. Columbia residents are warned, not to walk through this area and now a path might be built through this area.

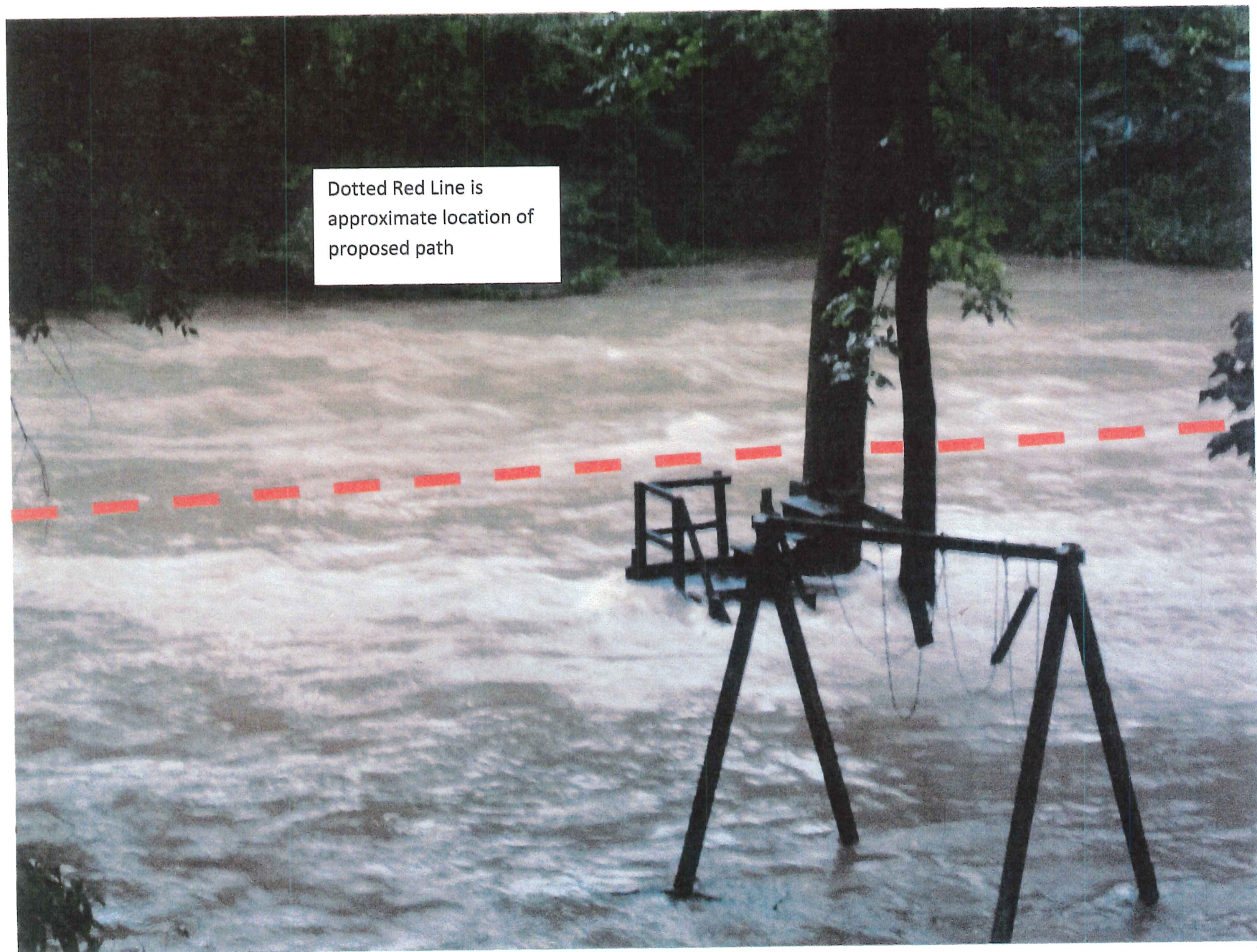
The maintenance cost of the pathway would be high due to soil erosion because of high water, causing the blacktop to wash away. Mud, tree stumps, logs and debris from flashflood would pose constant risks for those who use the trail. The path would be constructed over the main sewer line and water mainline. Therefore, the path would have to be torn up and rebuilt if repairs to these utilities are needed.

The flood plain extends 20-28 feet in elevation from the river and this path would be at the bottom of the floodplain along the river only a few feet above the water level. With the planned expansion of downtown Columbia, millions of square feet of impermeable surface will result in additional large amounts of water runoff. The proposed path along the river with frequent flash floods is very dangerous.

There is currently a path that runs from downtown Columbia to Lake Elkhorn and onto Savage. I have ridden this path many times. The proposed path is unnecessary and duplicative. In addition, there are several safer alternative routes that could be used. There are many worthwhile uses for Howard county taxes. Schools, libraries, flood control, fire and police protection all need to be funded. The downtown Columbia Patuxent Branch trail extension should not be funded because it is unsafe and harmful to the environment.



Dotted Red Line is
approximate location of
proposed path



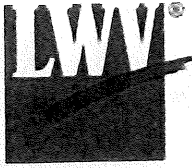


Attachment 4 April 30, 2014 Route 29 & Little Patuxent River Mid-Storm



Attachment 5 April 30, 2014 Route 29 & Little Patuxent River





League of Women Voters of Howard County
5430 Vantage Point Road, Suite C
Columbia, MD 21044
410-730-0142

April 29, 2015
Re: FY2016 Operating Budget

Chairman Sigaty and members of the County Council:

For Fiscal Year 2016, the League of Women Voters of Howard County ask for support with the proposed budgets for Community Services, Recreation and Parks and Education. Education includes Howard County Public School System, Howard Community College and Howard County Library System. We strongly support these proposed budgets.

We are here this evening to bring special attention to the proposed budget for the Board of Elections. We have one election in this year's budget which is the Presidential Primary in April, 2016. Maryland will continue to offer Early Voting for several days prior to Election Day. We anticipate a high turnout given the office of the President and a Senatorial opening in Maryland. We will be working closely with the Board of Elections staff in alerting potential voters to the new optical scan paper based voting machines.

The Board of Elections request is in the amount of \$3.2 million of General Fund dollars.

We urge your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lillie Gallant", is written above the printed name.

Lillie Gallant, President

HOWARD COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL
Testimony submitted to Howard County Council
Regarding FY2016 Proposed Budget
April 29, 2015

Good evening Chairwoman Sigaty 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 thank you for your past support. We appreciate all that you do on behalf of the citizens of Howard County. I am here this evening to remind you about the important contributions the arts make to our community. For FY2016, County Executive Allan Kittleman has proposed \$800,000 to support the arts through the community services partnership grant to the Arts Council, a 20% decrease over last year's arts appropriation.

The arts community understands that this is a very difficult budget year, there are many difficult decisions to be made, and cuts are needed across all sectors, but we are disappointed in the level of cuts proposed for the arts community. We hope the Executive will reconsider and will work with the Council during its upcoming work sessions to restore \$50,000 of the funding. Seventy-five percent of the FY16 arts appropriation will fund grant programs that provide operating and project support to about 50 organizations and schools that serve children and adults.

The Arts Council was established in 1981 to fulfill the provisions of County Code # 12.804a. The Arts Council has 34 years of service to the community – providing a wide variety of programs that foster the arts and encourage community-wide participation in the arts. As County leaders look for ways to improve the local economy and maintain our quality of life, the arts can be – and should be - part of the solution.

I was recently at a Howard County Chamber of Commerce meeting where President and CEO Leonardo McClarty said “we can’t have business development without community development. Investments in small and mid-sized arts and cultural organizations and neighborhood based groups are integral to community development. In building stronger, more resilient communities we can create an environment that will support growth in business.”

A strong arts sector improves our quality of life and is an economic asset that stimulates business activity, attracts tourism revenue, and retains a high quality work force. The 2012 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector made up 4.32 percent, or \$698.7 billion, of the nation's GDP—a larger share of the economy than construction, transportation and warehousing. The Bureau also reports arts and culture generates 4.7 million jobs and U.S. exports of arts goods (e.g., movies, paintings, jewelry) resulted in a \$25 billion arts trade surplus.¹

American companies face an international marketplace where value is increasingly determined by technology, knowledge and ideas. These companies rely on innovative, highly trained workers - many of whom are self-employed or freelancers. 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 these employers say they can't find the creative, innovative applicants they seek.²

In an economy that is driven by creativity and innovation, we will need to attract entrepreneurs and tech-savvy innovators – and in order to attract them - we will not only need strong public education, safety and transportation systems, but we will have to have state-of-the-art entertainment, arts, and recreational amenities and unique housing options that appeal to their active, 24-7 lifestyle. Ensuring that our workforce is competitive starts – right here- at home.

Howard County has positioned itself well to meet the expectations of this 21st century workforce. Ellicott City was recently named one of the “Top 20 Leading Creative Class Cities” by Richard Florida.³ The arts curriculum in our public schools is one of the strongest in the nation, we have a growing state-of-the-art community college, we have excellent recreational facilities, we have a vision for a vibrant Downtown Columbia that includes an arts and entertainment park, and we are home to over 792 arts-related businesses that employ 2693 people in the County.⁴ These include major tourist attractions, such as Merriweather Post Pavilion, for-profit media and design businesses, and a vibrant network of non-profit arts groups. The arts sector accounts for 4.3% of the total businesses in the County.

Howard County is a special place that has developed a strong community for the arts. To illustrate this point, a 2015 recent study by Webb Management Services found:

- Howard County has the second highest number of individual artists and creative industries per capita out of the seven Baltimore-Washington area counties.
- Howard County residents spend more per capita on arts and entertainment out of the seven metro counties.
- And, Howard County has the second highest level of arts participation per capita out of the seven metro counties.

The arts (both for- and non-profit) are an important part of the County's small business sector and the heart of the arts community are non-profit groups such as the Columbia Festival of the Arts, HoCoPoLitSo, Candlelight Concerts and others. These non-profits provide opportunities for engagement and participation, incubating artistic ideas and enterprises, and creating 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 arts businesses, enthusiastic audiences, policy and support from government, and contributions from businesses and individuals. I am here tonight to advocate for the non-profit arts groups by asking you to do your part by supporting the County Executive's 2016 arts appropriation.

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. They are used to operating on a shoe-string budget. County funding provides them with a reliable source 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 fostering diverse art forms. The non-profit arts groups, in turn, give back to our

community by enhancing our quality of life, attracting businesses and jobs, and generating revenue for the County. In FY14, not only did Howard County grantees provide us with exceptional programming, they used these funds to leverage \$3.75 million in revenues – 29% from earned income, 19% admissions, 15% Howard County, 12% individuals, 7% corporations, 6% State and Federal, 4% foundations, 4% from the Columbia Association and 4% other – and 133 FTE jobs.⁵ For every direct county dollar spent on the arts in Howard County, the arts groups raised an additional \$6 from other sources– a good return on our investment.

Statewide, there are 13,704 arts-related businesses that generate 47,852 jobs⁶, including 241 non-profit arts groups that generate 12,700 FTE jobs. The non-profit sector alone has a total annual impact of \$1 billion; most of these are located in Central Maryland.⁷

The arts add tourism dollars to the local economy as well. Locally, 20-30% of our non-profit arts audiences are made up of people who reside outside of Howard County,⁸ these visitors come to our County and spend money at local restaurants and businesses. The Maryland State Department of Business and Economic Development reports that every \$1 of operating generates an additional \$3.94 in spending on goods and services.⁹ Using this formula, the non-profit arts groups in Howard County, contributed an extra \$14.8 million in secondary spending to our local economy in FY14 for a total economic impact of \$18.5 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).

Seventy-five percent of the proposed county funding will go to support 4 grant programs that provide operating and project grants to about 50 organizations and schools.

- 1) The Community Arts Development program provides operating and project grants to local arts organizations as well as non-arts groups interested in presenting arts programs. In FY14, the Arts Council awarded \$324,931 (CAD: \$307,774, JRT: \$13,620, Organizational Development: \$3,537) to 20 Howard County organizations through this grant program.

- 2) The Baltimore City Arts and Culture program awards grants to city organizations that have regional significance and provide considerable services to Howard County residents. In FY14, we awarded \$162,464 to 11 city organizations.
- 3) The Outreach Howard program awards grants to City grantees to produce projects IN Howard County. In FY 14, \$65,000 was awarded to 7 organizations.
- 4) The Artist-in-Education 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 FY14, we awarded \$32,000 to 19 schools.

Each grant must be matched at least 1-to-1 by the organization receiving a grant award. 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 the 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 – 344,000 attended arts events sponsored, in part, through County funds in FY14 and grantees matched County dollars nearly 6-to-1. We also provided opportunities for 6,536 artists through these grant programs.

In addition to the grants program, the proposed budget provides funds to support the Arts Council's other principle program, the 27,000 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 10 volunteer run groups that participate in our Arts Advancement Program. In FY14, 39,450 people visited the Center and we provided opportunities for 2,697 artists and 3,425 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 from all walks of life.

Funds we receive from the County also support county-wide initiatives, such as, ARTsites, a partnership with 12 sites throughout the County to place sculptures for one year, as well as free community-based arts activities for low-income students, 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 100-120 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 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 their economic impact, 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 work place. 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 the 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 100 points better on their SAT scores than students with just one-half year of arts or music.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

While studying the arts, students hone their perceptual, analytic and interpretive skills while developing creative thinking, communications 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.

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.¹² 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. 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.

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.¹³

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.

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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

As the number of youth-related incidents continues to rise, Howard County may want to take a look at ways to use the arts as a preventative measure or as an alternative teaching method for troubled youth.

While many of us value the intrinsic impact of the arts on our lives - isn't it nice to be able to show those who are more outcome oriented the contributions the arts make to our local economy and how they help solve other challenges facing the County too!!

In closing, the arts entertain, engage, and enlighten us in many different ways and on many different levels. They are part of the solution - for economic development, for academic success,

for community health, and for our own personal well-being. They are a good investment with many great returns.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you this evening.

¹ *Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (1998-2012)*, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts, January 2015.

² *Ready To Innovate*, Conference Board, 2008, cited on www.artsusa.org/information_services/toolkit by Americans for the Arts.

³ *America's Leading Creative Class Cities in 2015*, Richard Florida. *City Lab*, The Atlantic Monthly Group, April 20, 2015.

⁴ *Creative Industries: Business & Employment in the Arts*, Americans for the Arts and Dun & Bradstreet, 2015.

⁵ Source: FY14 Howard County Arts Council Revenue Sources for the Arts, 2014.

⁶ *Creative Industries 2015: The State Report*, Americans for the Arts and Dun & Bradstreet, 2015.

⁷ *Economic Impact of the Arts in Maryland*, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, 2012.

⁸ *ArtsVision: State of the Arts in Howard County 2003*, Howard County Arts Council and Vision Howard County, 2003, page 21.

⁹ *Economic Impact of the Arts in Maryland*, Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, 2011.

¹⁰ *2012 College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile Report*, The College Board, 2012.

¹¹ *A Study of Model Community Arts Programs*, Howard County Arts Council and the Horizon Foundation, 2002, pp 76-77.

¹² *2009 State of the Field Report: Arts in Healthcare*, Society for the Arts in Healthcare, 2009.

¹³ Source: Americans For the Arts, www.artsusa.org.

¹⁴ Source: Americans For The Arts, www.artsusa.org.

¹⁵ *A Study of Model Community Arts Programs*, Howard County Arts Council and the Horizon Foundation, 2002, pp 77-78.

Laura Johnson, 6924 Little Brooke Court, Elkridge, MD 21075
Testimony IN SUPPORT OF the Howard County Arts Council's FY16 Proposed Budget
Before the Howard County Council
April 29, 2015

Good Evening. I am Laura Johnson, Vice President for Communications at the National Summer Learning Association and here representing Ducketts Lane Elementary School as incoming president of the PTA Board. I am testifying in support of the Howard County Arts Council's FY16 Proposed Budget and specifically, in support of the Artists-in-Education Grant Program that supports high quality arts experiences for students throughout our county.

As mom of a third grader at Ducketts Lane Elementary School, I am proud of our Howard County Public School System and its commitment to arts education, specifically. It is no coincidence that Howard County Public Schools rank among the best school districts in the nation...or that five Howard County public schools were among the Newsweek list of America's Top High Schools for 2014.

I believe that our school and community leaders have been intentional, creative and forward thinking about fulfilling the promise of college and career readiness for students here. It is clear that the arts: music, dance, theatre, media arts and the visual arts, are an essential part of a complete and competitive education for all students in Howard County.

As such, I urge your continued investment in the Howard County Arts Council's Budget and its Artists-in-Education Grant Program. Here's why:

Decades of research compiled by the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) of the Council of Chief State School Officers show time and again that students highly involved in the arts outperform students with little or no arts involvement, especially in school settings. They receive better grades, have more positive attitudes about school, and are less likely to drop out of high school. The arts inspire creativity and innovation, traits highly valued in the workforce. Research also shows that students who have had an arts-rich education volunteer more often and exhibit greater civic engagement than other students.

Ducketts Lane Elementary School – led by one of Howard County's finest educators, Heidi Balter – was the proud recipient of an Artists-in-Education Grant last year. This grant provided our new school with its very first artist-in-residency program with Amanda Pellerin of Young Audiences, Maryland. Together she and our school's amazing art teacher, Mrs. Lori Mellendick, took 5th grade students on an extraordinary learning experience around the theme of the Chesapeake Bay where they studied the

water cycles, plants, animals and local natural resources. The students functioned as young archaeologists, researchers and artists during the process--eventually creating a massive four by eight foot mural representing the habitat of the Chesapeake Bay.

Using a tactile form such as clay, gave the students a substantial gift in the end – this beautiful mural to forever grace the walls of our school. Tomorrow we will officially unveil this masterpiece to the entire school community at our Enrichment Night and also receive the Arts for Learning Leadership Award from Young Audiences. I can assure you that our 5th grade students who graduate this year will leave their mark on Ducketts Lane Elementary School and I can bet – in time – on the world.

We thank the Howard County Arts Council and its Artists-in-Education Grant program for this and the many rich arts experiences they bring to thousands of students in our schools. Our students will make a mark in this world because – through your continued investment in the Howard County Arts Council - they will enjoy an extraordinary, world class education that includes the arts. Thank you for the opportunity to speak and I urge your support of the Howard County Arts Council FY16 Budget to ensure that our schools and communities thrive for years to come.

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Tara Hart, 11145 Wood Elves Way, Columbia, Maryland 21044
Testimony IN SUPPORT OF the Howard County Arts Council's FY16 Proposed Budget
Before the Howard County Council
April 29, 2015

My name is Tara Hart and I am a resident of Columbia, a professor of Fine Arts and creative writing at Howard Community College, and Co-Chair of the Board of Directors at the Howard County Poetry and Literature Society, the forty-year-old small but mighty organization known as HoCoPoLitSo. The Howard County Arts Council's Community Arts Development grant program has been essential to HoCoPoLitSo, enabling us to make a direct and positive impact on Howard County citizens through access to the greatest writers alive today. We bring world-class writers, whose distinctions might include Pulitzer Prizes and National Book Awards, in direct contact with people, and this community is full of people hungry to connect with each other in learning new ideas and forms of expression. If you have been told that the arts are a luxury and their impact is vague and unmeasurable, I tell you that we have reams of evidence demonstrating otherwise. Our audiences tell us over and over again how much it means to meet authors in person, or to receive a literary promise and achievement award, or to see an episode of our interview show *The Writing Life*. In order to demonstrate our worthiness for these grants, we work extensively and efficiently in partnership with other organizations and spend a lot of time measuring and documenting the impact of our programs, and if I had time tonight I could show you in numbers, voices, and stories exactly how important it is that we all, whatever age, demographic, or income level, have access to great art presented in deliberate, well-designed, and meaningful ways. As this year's writer in residence, Joseph Ross, recently said of his experience in visiting all of our county high schools, including Homewood and Howard Community College, in classes designated for at risk, regular, honors, or G/T students, "Poetry helps our young people. It provides a safe place for them to explore their feelings: fears, joys, apprehensions. It provides them with a chance to create, to see the fruit of their own imaginations. Perhaps most importantly, it shows them how similar we all are— in our humanity." He quotes Lucille Clifton, the first Writer-in-Residence from Howard County, who said, "Poetry saves lives from the inside out." In a similar vein, writer Anne Lamott says, "Books help us understand who we are.... They show us what community and friendship mean; they show us how to live and die." Ladies and gentlemen, if I'm making this sound like life and death, I am, in a way — I'm asking you as someone who not only works in the arts, but who was so delighted 17 years ago to discover the not-just-economically enriched but culturally rich and enlightened community here, and who stayed here to raise her family, to please continue to support Howard County arts, recognize their immeasurable and priceless impact, and thus sustain the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual life of this great community.

Thank you.

NEIGHBOR RIDE, INC.
TESTIMONY TO HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
OPERATING BUDGET – DEPARTMENT OF CITIZEN SERVICES
COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS

April 29, 2015

Good evening, I am Bruce Fulton, Executive Director of Neighbor Ride. We are located at 5570 Sterrett Place, Suite 102, Columbia, MD 21044. As you know, we are a non-profit that provides door-to-door transportation for Howard County residents 60 and over. The service is provided by generous volunteers who schedule the rides and drive seniors using their own vehicles.

In our 11th year of operations, Neighbor Ride volunteers are currently completing over 98% of the requested rides. Within the next two weeks, we will provide our 100,000 trip since our service began. Our office volunteers handle approximately 2,500 calls each month while our volunteer drivers are averaging almost 15,000 miles per month. We added 172 passengers in FY14 and have already added nearly 150 more in FY15. Our growth has resulted in the need for more office and driver volunteers to support our passengers. Ensuring that the county's seniors maintain their health and community connections will be assured by spreading the increasing demand across more volunteers. Thank you all for your continued help to Neighbor Ride in finding volunteers and local partners.

While we received \$44,400 in the proposed FY16 budget, we had requested an operating grant for \$48,000. The impact of this shortfall will be felt most in our

volunteer recruitment efforts which could lead to a reduction in our ride request completion rate.

This year we will continue to give back to the community through CarFit sessions in cooperation with the Office on Aging and the Police Department.

With 4 part-time staff supporting the more than 335 volunteers who generously serve on the Board, do special projects, provide administrative support, coordinate ride requests and provide the rides, we are a very cost efficient model of supplemental transportation. In fact, for FY15, leveraging of our CSP grant with other income sources, and including volunteer time, the return on investment to Howard County residents is being maintained at about 16:1.

Additionally, I would like to emphasize that we realize we are one of many organizations in the county dependent on the CSP budget. We very much appreciate County Executive Kittleman's funding for CSP grants. Thank you for your continuing support as well.

I would like to close with thoughts from passengers and the families of passengers:

From Passengers' Families:

My brother works full time and I live out of state. My mother and father have been married a long time but my father developed health issues and needed to be in a nursing home. This has been a very difficult transition for all my family, especially

for my Korean speaking parents. Then I found Neighbor Ride's website and learning my mother could use this service to visit my father in the nursing home. She goes three times a week to spend time with my Dad and to take him the Korean food he so enjoys. This volunteer transportation service has been a godsend for our family during this difficult time.

From Passengers:

"Neighbor Ride's volunteers are courteous, thoughtful and caring individuals. This is a remarkable service that takes the stress of finding a ride and turns it into a positive feeling of community."

Again we greatly appreciate the support we've received from Howard County. Thank you for your time this evening.

Testimony in support to fully fund Howard County Executive's fy16 proposed budget for the Howard County Tourism Council at \$1,075,800 as presented to the Howard County Council on Wednesday, April 29, 2015.

Good evening Councilchair Sigaty and members of the County Council. The Tourism Team is delivering to you a handy note pad, made out of recycled paper with an attached dicut pen, so that you can TAKE NOTE that the vibrant and diverse tourism industry in Howard County is benefiting from our sales and marketing initiatives.

I am Rachelina Bonacci, the CEO of the Howard Council Tourism Council and I reside in the Village of Dorsey's Search. I THANK YOU for not only the time to testify this evening but for the many, many years of investment in Tourism.

Tonight, I respectfully request that you fully fund the Howard County Executive's fy16 budget for the Tourism Council at \$1,075,800 as derived from the outstanding performance over the years of the dedicated and legislated hotel tax. For all of us on the award-winning Tourism Team and our Board of Directors, it is an honor to work with and for the citizens and businesses of Howard County to sway travelers from nearby and faraway for a daytrip, week night or weekend stay.

So we all know that Howard County is home to Merriweather Post Pavilion, a top regional tourist attraction for nearly 50 years that still tops *Billboard's* and *Rolling Stone's* list of best places for live music. So tonight, I thought I'd give you a fy15 Tourism Team Top 10 list of TA-DAHs that is helping ROCK the Comptroller's designated tourism taxes!

#10

Co-hosted Ellicott City Plein Air with our BFFs the Arts Council as part of the summer Arts Al Fresco campaign encouraging everyone to enjoy cultural happenings outdoors.

9

With our new COO we are authoring and activating a 3-year strategic plan while applying for industry accreditation all in preparation for Columbia's 50th in 2017.

#8

Introduced new look, new logo, new colateral and a bigger and better *Visitor + Resident* guide.

#7

Hosted the hottest Summer & coolest Winter Restaurant Weeks EVER luring urban foodies to suburban fabulous fixe price feasts. And our lucky locals loved that we collaborated with the Chamber to celebrate our culinary scene.

#6

Greeted thousands of guests from all-over-the-world in our Welcome Centers in Ellicott City and Savage Mill (...still no one from Wyoming!), double dared Ghost Tours and braved 3rd grader field trips

#5

Launched new Great Golf Giveaway multi-media campaign in the Spring and Fall with incentives to play all of the County's courses from Putt-Putt to the Pros.

#4

Promoted Family Haycations, March Gladness and FeBREWary BROmance all with prizes awarded via Twitter and Facebook and with the opening of Haven on the Lake created a new Wellness area on our homepage.

#3

Participated in regional tradeshow and sales missions with the Maryland Office of Tourism, Visit Baltimore and Destination DC. Hosted meeting planners and tour operators on site-visits plus generated leads via Cvent, all to benefit our hotels and meeting venues.

#2

Provided media sponsorship, on-site info tent services, hotel packages, traditional and digital PR activites for the County's signature events like the Columbia Festival of the Arts and Symphony of Lights, plus soccer and lacrosse tournaments

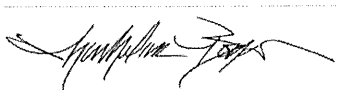
...and #1

Rocked out *The Washington Post* full-circulation of the Sunday travel section AND local living touting Ellicott City as THE destination for shopping and history sprees reaching millions via newspapers on their doorsteps and in-hands on their iEverything's.

So looking forward what's now and what's next for fy16? We've issued an RFP for a new responsive design fully-optimized visually stunning website. We'll be investing in destination videos since YouTube is top search engine especially when people plan travel. We're developing a geocache trail for the Patapsco Valley and releasing a super cool something in July, that for now, is Top Secret, so that our frenemy destinations don't find out. We'll continue to promote farm-to-table, dock- to-dish and add garden-to-glass, all good for culinary and agritourism. With Pope Francis' visit to DC and Philly in September, we'll promote Faith & Food local itineraries as our hotels will be sold-out as more people are expected in each city then for President Obama's 1st inaugural. In October, we are co-hosting the prestigious three-day Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit . Following the success of Restaurant Weeks, we'll do "Hotel Weeks" during the holidays. All of our expanded multi-media media buys from TripAdvisor to *Better Homes & Gardens* will continue to have a unique url and trackable call to action. And packaging, packaging, packaging every Howard County experience with overnight stays while introducing a "show your badge" for hotel guests to get deals while in town during their business meetings, weddings or sports events.

So on behalf of the 10,000 folks that make their living in our tourism and hospitality industry often working nights, holidays and weekends, I want to again say thank you for your on-going investment in the Tourism Council. Your investment in our organization has a direct impact on the many locally owned small businesses and non-profits that are our marketing partners. Please know your talented and dedicated Tourism Team works 7 days a week, 363 days a year, creating award-winning promotions that has raised the visibility of our destination. As we always say, having fun is serious business, and now say, tourism is EVERYBODY'S business, as travelers who visit Howard County leave behind \$16M in tax dollars that are reinvested to maintain our resident's Nationally recognized high quality of life.

Thank you,



Rachelina Bonacci, CEO, Howard County Tourism & Promotion

County Council Speech April 2015

Alexis Downs

10806 Vista Rd. Columbia, MD 21044

410-992-1923

Good Evening,

My name is Alexis Downs, currently residing at 10806 Vista Rd Columbia, MD. I am providing testimony on behalf of the Foreign-born Information and Referral Network where I am currently one of three immigration services providers. I have the honor of working amongst a team of individuals who are passionate and dedicated to county residents. As a team, we work together to ensure foreign-born county residents and their families can meet their short and long term needs and aspirations. We cannot do this without your support and I am here tonight to thank you on behalf of our clients and employees.

Your support of FIRN has such a vast impact on county residents. We are currently doing our best to keep up with the pace of the foreign-born population in Howard County. County residents looking to book an immigration related appointment at FIRN are currently being offered appointments for mid-June; about a month and a half wait time. When emergency cases come up, as they always seem to on a weekly basis, we find ways to squeeze individuals in an already jam packed schedule. There is never a dull moment at FIRN.

FIRN provides services to a diverse group of immigrants with a wide range of inquiries. Some of our services we offer for free and for some services we charge nominal fees to county residents that can afford to pay. Many of our clients are hard working individuals who can afford to pay our nominal fees that help supplement some of the costs in supporting FIRN. However, many others cannot afford our services and therefore those who demonstrate an inability to pay are offered full or partial discounts. We have for instance ongoing cases for individuals residing at shelters, victims of domestic violence,

individuals receiving dialysis, children that have been abandoned and neglected, individuals that recently lost a job, and the list could go on. Your support is essential for these clients. By investing in FIRN, you are investing in the community. FIRN's work for these vulnerable populations has exponential results. Just one example of these results is our work with 3 county residents who found themselves homeless this year. These three individuals all hailed from different countries, had different immigration statuses, but they had something in common: They did not have access to the legal documentation they needed to stabilize their lives. One individual was a naturalized US Citizen and with FIRN's help was able to secure a replacement citizenship certificate. Yet another had an expired permanent resident card that had to be renewed to access his social security benefits. Another had no legal status when he came to FIRN but discovered he was eligible to obtain a work permit. This is just a small example of the work FIRN engages in. Keep in mind those are three cases and we see an average of 20-30 individuals in a day between the immigration counselors and social worker.

Thank you for your time tonight and again I thank you on behalf of FIRN clients and staff.

Hi, my name is Farhat Dean. First of all, I am very honored to be here to talk about FIRN. I came to the United States in 2000 and have lived in Howard County ever since. I was in an abusive situation and was alone in this country with no help. Ms. Judy Templeton, supervisor at Family and Children Services, helped to rescue me and to bring me to FIRN.

I was very terrified because I was alone and new in this country and I didn't know anyone. However, I met the most wonderful staff members at FIRN: Kristin, Bonny Knight, Laura Pfeifer, Alexis, Walter, and Pedro. FIRN has the most wonderful staff who welcomes everybody regardless of race or nationality! FIRN felt like home and I trusted the staff enough to talk about myself and my situation. I had two minor children and life was very hard with no job and no place to live. FIRN helped me tremendously to better myself. Kristin and Laura helped me get into an interpreter training. Laura also helped me to find interpreting jobs so I could earn some money to take care of my kids.

Being a single mom with two minor kids was not easy so FIRN helped me to file papers for my citizenship. They helped me file a fee waiver because I could not afford the immigration fee. Because of them, I'm a very proud citizen of the USA. Next, they helped me to sponsor my parents so they could help take care of my kids while I'm working to support my family. By the grace of God and the assistance from FIRN, my parents came to the United States to help me to raise my family. I took an early childhood teacher training and worked in a private school as a teacher to take care of my parents and my children.

It has been almost six years since my parents became permanent residents and they are in the process of getting their citizenship. Jesmin helped me to fill out the applications and fee waiver as I cannot pay the fee. My family and I are thankful to FIRN and the donor agencies who have helped me to fulfill my dreams, as well as thousands of other families through this amazing organization. I really respect and love every single staff member. They are like angels working at FIRN and they welcome and help all the people in need of assistance.

Thank you once again for giving me an opportunity to talk in favor of FIRN. Thank you so much.

Testimony

County Council Budget Hearing

April 29, 2015

Andrea Ingram, Executive Director
Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, Inc.

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center and the Community Services Partnership grant program. You are very familiar with our services and programs and we thank you for your support over many years.

In the past year, Grassroots has continued to respond to the growing needs of Howard County residents. As the Single Point of Entry for the Coordinated System of Homeless Services, our crisis counselors are responding to 60 to 100 new households each month that are homeless or imminently homeless. We attempt to help the family or individual resolve the crisis and refer eligible households to the coordinated system for more intensive intervention if no solution is found. Counselors work hard on preventing homelessness, re-housing if possible, and short-term interventions which allow for more time to seek a more permanent resolution. The most vulnerable households are prioritized for admission to our 33-bed family and women's shelter and the 18-bed men's shelter. During the winter, the Cold Weather Shelter, a successful partnership with the faith community, provided an additional 20 -25 beds each night. Again this past winter Grassroots managed the "Code Blue" Emergency Motel shelter during life-threatening weather conditions. For our crisis staff and administrative staff, this was a very labor intensive activity, but we can be proud that everyone was sheltered during this unusually cold winter.

Grassroots also operates the Day Resource Center in partnership with the faith community serving the chronically homeless population living outside along the Route One corridor in Howard County. We are excited to work with the County Department of Housing and Volunteers of America to combine the Center with a 33-bed housing project to serve this population.

Other crisis services include our hotlines, walk-in counseling, and the Mobile Crisis Team which responds with the police to psychiatric crises, intense family conflict, and traumatic death situations in Howard County. After a community evaluation of the Mobile Crisis Team it was determined that another team was needed to respond to calls in the northern district. The second team was implemented November 1. We anticipate having over 800 responses this year, compared to 542 last year.

We deeply appreciate the County's significant support of Grassroots and enormous generosity of the Howard County community. However, the overall funding picture for the coming year is very challenging, putting even more pressure on local support. As you must know, federal funding over the

past few years has been reduced, and generally less reliable. State support tends to be flat from year to year. The exception in the past year is increasing funds available for mental health services. Even private funders regularly change their priorities and limit the amounts available for non-profit agencies. The trend is clear that local jurisdictions need to take the lead in funding the human services priorities in their community.

The County Executive's budget includes funding for Grassroots of \$1.5 million for FY 16, the same amount as the current fiscal year. We are grateful that our funding will be maintained, however, we must find ways to reduce expenditures in a very tight budget, and increase other sources of funding to continue to serve at current levels. We ask that you support County Executive Kittleman's recommended funding for Grassroots and appreciate your serious consideration and support.



**Howard County Council Public Hearing
April 29, 2015**

FY 2016 County Operating Budget

Good evening Chairman Sigaty, Vice Chairperson Weinstein and Council members. As President of the Association of Community Services, it is my privilege to offer testimony on behalf of our 115 nonprofit member organizations and community advocates who work diligently on behalf of over 200,000 County residents each year.

Our county population still includes over 20,000 households—nearly 18 percent—that earn less than \$50,000 a year. If there is any good news in that figure, it is that the 20,000 is a decrease of 2,000 from the previous year. On the other hand, the number of households earning less than \$25,000 a year has increased to over 8,200—now 7 percent of Howard County’s households. And as of this past March, there were 484 homeless children in those households.

We are in the process of updating the *ACS Self-Sufficiency Report*, which we will get to you just as soon as it is completed. While the data are preliminary, I can say at this time that the need for services and supports in our community since 2013 has not abated but continues to increase. ACS is therefore sincerely appreciative of the continued commitment of the County Executive and this Council to the County’s nonprofit sector—particularly through Community Service Partnership grants.

Because of continuing Administration and Council support for the Plan to End Homelessness, the Coordinated System of Homeless Services is up and running. While there has been significant progress made in efficiently and effectively coordinating services and allocating resources among eighteen agencies, it is important to note that Grassroots still is receiving more than 70 calls per month from people who are or are about to be homeless and more than 200 households are currently receiving or awaiting case management by Bridges to Housing Stability and other agencies to help them resolve their housing crisis. We are grateful for the Plan to End Homelessness funding included in this budget, but point out that it is the minimum amount required to maintain the current level of service. Over the long term, additional resources will be needed to reach the Plan goal.

Homelessness is the appropriate segue to the topic of housing that is affordable to those in our community with incomes below \$50,000. The Plan to End Homelessness embraces the “Housing First” concept that has proven across the nation that once housed, individuals and families can more productively address the challenges that led to their homelessness. The proposed Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) budget that will support development of Single Efficiency Apartments aligns with the “Housing First” strategy—and is a huge and appreciated step for this county in meeting the needs of the chronically homeless.

But even a five (5) percent cut to the Department’s budget will hamper efforts to increase the number of affordable rental units for households that are currently or are about to be homeless because they cannot afford to pay Howard County’s high rents. Mixed income housing developments and acquiring and redeveloping older affordable housing complexes will not alone create the needed 6700 units for these low-income county residents. DHCD and the Housing Commission need to have the means to respond to opportunities as they present themselves—whether they are by acquiring scattered site units, incentivizing property owners and developers or instituting new strategies that are working in other jurisdictions.

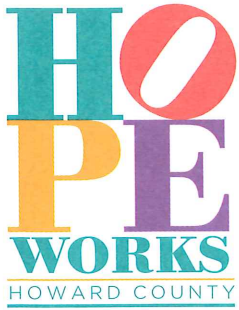
Affordable, accessible housing is commonly agreed upon as the most important first step in helping low income residents, and residents with behavioral or physical disabilities, become productive members of our community. Throughout the past two years there has been extensive talk about the need for a county wide housing strategy. Are there sufficient resources in this budget to begin to develop a Housing Master Plan?

Beyond CSP grants, the Plan to End Homelessness and housing, we are appreciative and strongly supportive of all the resources allocated in this budget that will help keep the Howard County safety net in place for the most vulnerable in our community. But, as you are considering this Operations Budget and as we work together this next (fiscal) year, we ask you to remember that there are still holes in the safety net. Mending those holes is, of course, not solely government's responsibility. To help ensure that the private sector is also engaged in net mending, ACS continues to work with the nonprofit community to foster efficiencies, diversify funding sources and build relationships with the business community. And, as always, we appreciate the opportunities that you present our organization to engage with you and give voice to those in our community who cannot speak for themselves.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Ande Kolp
ACS President



Public Hearing – Operating Budget FY 16
Testimony form HopeWorks of Howard County

April 29, 2015

Dear County Council Members,

As you know HopeWorks of Howard County is our county's local rape crisis and domestic violence center. We work to make our community safer for women and girls and in doing so; make our county safer for everyone. We do this through our comprehensive and customized client services as well as our public education and prevention work.

Between fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2014, we have seen the number of individual clients we serve grow from 2,536 in FY12 to 3,590 in FY14, which is a 41% increase. We have seen dramatic growth in the number of people who come to Howard County General Hospital for medical care as a result of sexual or domestic violence and receive HopeWorks advocacy services – 94 people served from April 2013 through March 2014 and 200 people served from April 2014 through March 2015. And when we finally opened our second transitional house in February, it was full within three weeks.

We work hard to continue to meet the growing demand for our services and we need the ongoing support of the Department of Citizen Services to succeed in meeting this demand. We ask that you fully support the budget for Citizen Services – particularly the Citizen Services Partnership grants program.

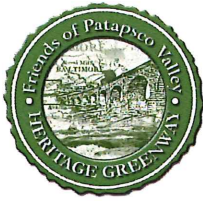
The Department of Citizen Services is however, much more than just a funding source for HopeWorks. They have been true partners in the effort to improve and stabilize services for some of our most vulnerable citizens. HopeWorks participation in the North Laurel Multi-Service Center, the Coordinated System of Homeless Services, the Getting Ahead program out of the Board to Promote Self-Sufficiency and the current conversation regarding a possible non-profit center are all direct results of the leadership of Lois Mikkila and the incredible staff of Citizen Services. Because of their tireless work and larger vision, our clients receive greater quality, more comprehensive and better coordinated services than ever before.

Again, we ask that you fully fund the proposed budget for the Department of Citizen Services and we also ask that you take a critical look at the recommendations regarding the future of this department. HopeWorks and those we serve do not want to see the benefits gained under the current leadership and structure be lost in transition.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Pollitt Hill".

Jennifer Pollitt Hill, MSW
Executive Director



Patapsco Heritage Greenway
P. O. Box 96
Ellicott City, MD 21041
410-480-0824

April 29, 2015

Councilperson Mary Kay Sigaty
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Road
Ellicott City, MD, 21043

Ref: **FY16 Budget Hearing**

Dear Chairman Sigaty ,

My name is John Slater and I live at 4993 Dalton Drive, in Columbia. I am writing on behalf of the Patapsco Heritage Greenway (PHG). I currently have the honor of serving as the president of the organization.

The Mission of the Friends of the Patapsco Valley & Heritage Greenway *is to protect and preserve the environment, history and heritage of the Patapsco Valley.*

I'm here to request continued financial support for the Patapsco Heritage Greenway in fiscal year 2016. Howard County assisted us with \$75,000 when we started the management plan process. With those funds we were able to match state funds to produce a first class Management Plan. The Howard County Council, Baltimore County Council and the Maryland State Heritage Authority gave us a unanimous vote of approval for our Management Plan. The Plan enables eligibility for future state funding so that we can grow our organization to better protect and enhance the Patapsco Valley.

As a result of this work, on January 15, 2015 our vision of creating a state certified Maryland Heritage Area was realized when we were approved as the 13th Certified Heritage Area in the State.

On March 1, we hired Mary Catherine Cochran, our first full time Executive Director. With our certification in hand and full time staff on board, we are very confident in our ability to implement the Management Plan and advance our mission to better protect and enhance the Valley.

There is no question that State Certification will provide many benefits to numerous environmental, cultural, historical, and heritage tourism assets in Howard and Baltimore Counties. The Patapsco River valley continues to amaze us with its relevancy in the past and its current relevancy as a major regional resource.

We are motivated to ensure that the Patapsco Valley remains a vital resource for our generation and for future generations. In the past 18 months we have accomplished the following:

- Initiated major efforts to obtain recognition as a Maryland Heritage Area, which started with a ULI-TAP study and included numerous outreach meetings to win community and county support.
- We selected a professional consultant who helped us ready our Management Plan for submission. And we're delighted to have secured grant funding for these endeavors. We finished our Management Plan in record time.
- PHG held, and continues to hold, public environmental events, such as outdoor scavenger hunts for school children, tree plantings and maintenance days, and water quality testing. Our many stream cleanups are always a hit and are kicked off in the spring with the big Project Clean Stream Weekend. This year we also started the popular TGIF cleanups on the 3rd Friday of the spring months. 1600 ~~X number~~ of volunteers have assisted us with these initiatives and we've removed ~~X amount~~ 38 tons of trash from the Heritage Area.
- We partnered with the Center for Watershed Protection to receive a grant to manage an evaluation of the Tiber Hudson River in Ellicott City.
- We have a corps of "weed warriors" who maintain the beautiful Ellicott City/Oella Entrance Garden- a gateway to our historic districts.
- A "Video Archive" documenting historical events was added to our website at www.patapscoheritagegreenway.org.
- Interpretive signs were installed at Union Dam.
- We moved into our new one room office in the Carriage House at Belmont thanks to Howard County, especially the Department of Recreation and Parks.

- "History Days" last fall ran for 8 straight days with a different special event each day. 450 people attended these events that showcased our unique heritage.

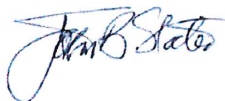
And looking forward to 2015-16:

- We will partner with the Howard County Conservancy on programs to be held at Belmont Manor and Historic Park in Elkridge.
- Our recent State Certification as a Heritage Area enables partner organizations to obtain state funding for programs in support of the Valley and we will work with them to access those funds.
- Our State Certification as a Maryland Heritage Area in January will provide us with more clout to be a stronger voice for preservation of our environment and historic sites.
- We will continue our environmental stewardship programs.
- We will sponsor a second History Days in the Fall of 2015.
- We will work with the Howard County Historical Society to publish a new edition of Hal Sharp's book on the Patapsco Valley.
- Our new full time executive director will enable us to be more efficient and take concrete steps towards implementing our ambitious and exciting Management Plan.

With Howard County's financial support we see our organization being able to expand and accomplish more and more each year. Your help is a vital part of our effort to protect and enhance the Patapsco Valley, which in turn helps to insure our high quality of life in this community.

We thank you for your support and urge inclusion of \$100,000 in the Howard County FY16 Operating Budget to be allocated to the Patapsco Heritage Greenway.

Sincerely,



John B. Slater, President
Patapsco Heritage Greenway
c/o Slater Associates, Inc.
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Columbia, MD 21044
410-992-0001