



Fairfax County NAACP, Unit 7066  
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TO: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Fairfax County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People  
RE: Testimony for FY2020 Budget and Budget Guidance for FY2021  
DATE: April 9, 2019

Madame Chair, Members of the Board, and County Executive Hill:

Fairfax County is one of the most attractive places to live and work, not only in Northern Virginia, but throughout the region, and a big reason for that is our rich diversity. However, that diversity is being increasingly threatened by rising home prices and the lack of affordable housing in the region. The situation will be exacerbated by the arrival of Amazon, which is projected to bring an additional 25,000 employees - most of whom will make six-figure salaries. Demand is already increasing dramatically, which is pushing the almost 70,000 poor and working class people out of Fairfax county. According to the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors, the number of homes under contract rose by 70 percent over the last year. This means that fewer and fewer of our teachers, county staff, hospitality industry workers, nurses, and public safety officials will be able to live in the communities they serve. This means that the fewer and fewer of our young people will be able to leave the nest once they graduate high school or college. That means that fewer and fewer of our elderly population will be able to age in place without having to make unconscionable choices of paying to keep a roof over their heads or paying to put food on the table or purchasing medication. Up to 20,000 senior households and 10,000 disabled households are making these choices everyday as we speak. And this means that many people of color will also be forced to abandon their homes as our communities experience gentrification. Fifty percent of the county's African American community are currently categorized as housing insecure; and 50% of the County's homeless population are African American.

While the NAACP voted in favor of the Housing Commission's recommendation to add a minimum of 5,000 units over the next fifteen years, this problem cannot wait fifteen years, and 5,000 units would not come close to addressing the actual current need which is 30,000 units, much less the projected need fifteen years from now. The problem of affordable housing is becoming similar to a raging five-alarm fire, but unfortunately the county's approach has been to tackle it with a garden hose instead of giving it the priority attention it truly deserves.

**Therefore, we strongly urges the Board of Supervisors to increase funding for the Housing Trust Fund in the 2020 Budget by exploring inefficiencies in other programs and/or include an additional half-penny real estate tax in this year's budget.** These funds should be used to stimulate new investment in new market affordable units, and preserve existing ones. Also, beginning in FY2021, approve an annual appropriation of \$50 million for the County's Housing Trust Fund. The argument that there is already unused money in the Trust Fund is also unacceptable, and the county should address this immediately to encourage more private investment.

**In a related matter, we applaud the county for funding efforts to investigate real estate steering and discrimination.** The 2017 Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs report found that because of past discriminatory practices in housing, Fairfax County does not have the racial distribution in housing that would be present in a free housing market. These studies should begin to address this issue.

Next we would like to revisit the issue of early childhood education. There are over 17,000 children from low-income families eligible for county-subsidized pre-K education who are not receiving it - over 4,000 of which are currently wait-listed. Last year the county only provided funding for an additional 36 children; but in response to our requests to do more, the county claimed it would conduct a study to learn the full scope of the problem and cost to implement universal pre-K. Unfortunately, as of today the county has neither followed-through with the promised study nor funded a meaningful increase for the known children. This year the county is funding the exact same increase as it did last year - 36.

**Therefore we are reiterating our call for the county to commit necessary resources to enroll at least 300 low-income children in pre-K in 2020 and to devise a long-term plan to provide for at least 2,000 children over the next five years.**

**We applaud and support the plan to fund the purchase and implementation of police body worn cameras using the funds that were set aside to implement the recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Police Practices and Review Commission.** This would be a significant step towards bringing the Fairfax County Police Department on par with other local and regional departments. As one of the largest in the country, it's important that our department remains a leader in innovation, transparency, and public accountability.

***Kofi Annan***

President, Fairfax County NAACP