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**Joint Board Matter with Chairman McKay and Supervisor Lusk
Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week**

Members of the Board,

As we approach Thanksgiving and winter holidays, many families around Fairfax County and across the country will gather and celebrate with their loved ones. Unfortunately, some will not be able to share the pleasures of this joyful season due to the realities of food insecurity and homelessness. To raise awareness about these critical issues, the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger designate the week before Thanksgiving each year as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

In Fairfax County, we appreciate our relative prosperity. However, we recognize that many residents still lack adequate access to food, despite the significant efforts of the county, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations. The 2024 Hunger Report from the Capitol Area Food Bank, which provides a breakdown of food insecurity in Fairfax County, indicates a food insecurity rate of 27% in the county, and approximately 309,000 individuals currently experiencing food insecurity.

Fairfax County has also faced significant humanitarian challenges related to homelessness. Each year, the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness collaborates with several nonprofits to conduct a Point-in-Time Count of individuals experiencing homelessness across the county. This past January, the count revealed a 23% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing the needs of our community members who face food and housing insecurity requires a compassionate, collaborative approach involving government agencies,

nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and individuals. We are fortunate to be part of a caring community where increased awareness of food insecurity and homelessness encourages us to work together toward solutions.

Therefore, I ask without objection, that the Board of Supervisors direct staff to prepare a proclamation recognizing November 17 to November 23 as “Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week” in Fairfax County to be presented at a future Board meeting. We further move that the Office of Public Affairs be directed to publicize the week of November 17 to November 23 as “Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week” in Fairfax County.