



CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., *President*
Ralph E. Patterson, II, M.A., *Vice President*
Gilbert O. Bowling, III
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.
Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.

Mark Belton
County Administrator

March 7, 2023

Bill: HB 947 – Charles County - Property Tax - Credit for Volunteer Emergency Responders
Committee: House – Ways and Means
Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chairwoman Wilkins, and Members:

On behalf of the County Commissioners for Charles County, this letter is to express support for the passage of HB 947– Charles County - Property Tax - Credit for Volunteer Emergency Responders with amendments described below.

HB 947 enables the Charles County Commissioners to grant, by law, a tax credit against the real property tax imposed on the owner–occupied residence of active or retired volunteer fire, rescue, or emergency medical services in Charles County, and their surviving unmarried spouses.

As written, HB 947 limits our ability to provide the tax credit to those volunteers with federal adjusted gross income of \$50,000 or less. **The Commissioners request that the income limit be increased to \$250,000, as was originally requested by the Commissioners to the Charles County Delegation.** This change also brings the bill in line with the cross-file, SB 521, that currently includes an income limit of \$250,000. Ultimately, it is the Commissioners’ responsibility to balance the County budget, and to weigh competing priorities against finite resources. We respectfully request that the income limit be increased to \$250,000 to allow the Commissioners more flexibility as we develop a local law to implement the credit once it is passed by the General Assembly. This increase will allow us to incentivize experienced career fire and medical emergency responders employed in other jurisdictions to volunteer in our County, which is desperately needed.

Charles County relies exclusively on volunteers for emergency fire response, and partially for emergency medical services. Given the role that our volunteers perform in the public safety of our County, we believe this small credit against their real property tax liability is warranted. We encourage a favorable committee report on HB 947 with amendment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our support.

Sincerely,

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President
County Commissioners of Charles County

cc: Charles County Delegation