



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

WILL JAWANDO  
COUNCILMEMBER, AT-LARGE  
CHAIR, EDUCATION & CULTURE COMMITTEE  
PLANNING, HOUSING, AND PARKS COMMITTEE

February 7, 2024

Re: Support for House Bill 470

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to share my strong support for House Bill 470 sponsored by Delegate Palakovich Carr. This bill would allow county governments, including Montgomery County, more flexibility to set income tax rates for residents, thereby strengthening the County's capacity to fund public education and transportation. I have worked closely with Delegate Palakovich Carr on issues related to income taxes, and I am grateful for the opportunity to express my support for this bill to the committee.

As an At-Large County Councilmember in Montgomery County, this bill represents an opportunity for counties to better meet the needs of our community. This bill is particularly important to me as Chair of the Montgomery County Council Education & Culture Committee. As you know, Montgomery County has the largest school district in Maryland and the 15th largest school system in the country. Today, MCPS has more than 160,000 students and 25,000 employees across our 211 elementary, middle, and high schools. Our school system is over 75% students of color, nearly half of whom qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch (FARMS), making meeting the needs of our diverse school system a top priority. This bill would provide an important source of additional revenue for that purpose.

While funding our public school system has always been critical, the needs of our school systems are increasingly complex. Our teachers, staff, and principals are called on to address many more social and emotional challenges, and more hunger and poverty, while also facilitating the education and student learning that is the centerpiece of our public school system. All of these challenges mean that our schools will continue to require increasing levels of funding.

I am grateful for Delegate Palakovich Carr's efforts to provide counties more flexibility with respect to income taxes and to be forward-thinking about the need to provide additional funding for our schools. I appreciate the committee's thoughtful consideration of the bill and urge a favorable report on HB470.

Sincerely,

WILL JAWANDO