



February 24, 2026

**Senate Bill 520**

**Property Tax - Charter Counties - Application of County Tax Limitation on  
Public Safety Budget**

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 520 – Property Tax - Charter Counties - Application of County Tax Limitation on Public Safety Budget. This Bill would allow a charter county, by a simple majority vote of its county councilmembers serving at the time, to collect more property tax revenues than what is authorized under the county’s charter for the purpose of funding the approved public safety budget of the county.

Like most counties, education and public safety are two spending categories that dominate Anne Arundel County’s operating budget. In FY 26, \$981 million for education and \$525 million for public safety together account for nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of all county general fund expenditure (41% and 22 % respectively). This is consistent with the public view on what our top priorities are. While funding education is an investment in our future, public safety is the most fundamental obligation of government to its people. Due to legal mandates that largely limit the county’s flexibility on its education funding, public safety must compete with other services for the remaining budget. However, the public safety budget is still subject to existing legal mandates, and passage of new public safety State laws could further restrict local fiscal flexibility. Current State law recognizes the challenges local education budgets face and grants an exception that allows for an override of a charter limit that restricts the ability to generate new revenue. The Public Safety category should be empowered with the same option to override the charter limit to its budget, should it find itself in a state that cannot sufficiently support critical public safety expenditures.

Just like the exception granted to the education budget, this Bill is not mandatory, and no county must do it. It simply affords charter counties a tool that can be used to help navigate them through fiscal challenges and ensure that both education and public safety are adequately funded for the public good. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 520.

Stuart Pittman  
County Executive