

**FOP35\_SB520\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lee Holland

Position: FAV



Fraternal Order of Police  
Montgomery County Lodge 35

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TESTIMONY OF LEE HOLLAND  
PRESIDENT, MONTGOMERY COUNTY FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE LODGE 35  
BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE  
SENATE BILL 520 – FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35, I submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 520.

This bill gives charter counties limited authority—similar to authority they already have for funding public education—to ensure adequate funding for public safety when local tax caps would otherwise prevent them from meeting core public safety needs. It does not mandate a tax increase and applies only to approved public safety budgets.

For law enforcement, this flexibility is essential to address staffing shortages, training needs, and rising operational costs that directly affect community safety.

Senate Bill 520 includes clear safeguards by requiring that any additional revenue be used exclusively for public safety purposes.

For these reasons, Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35 respectfully urges a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Holland  
President  
Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35

**2026\_02\_24 Testimony on SB 520 by Lisa Titus .pdf**

Uploaded by: Lisa Titus

Position: FAV



**UFCW LOCAL  
1994 MCGEO**

**Gino Renne, President**  
**Lisa Blackwell-Brown, Secretary-Treasurer**  
**Lisa Titus, Recorder**

**A VOICE FOR WORKING AMERICA**

## **SB 520 - Property Tax – Charter Counties – Application of County Tax Limitation on Public Safety Budget**

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
February 24, 2026

**SUPPORT**

Lisa Titus, Recorder, UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO

On behalf of **UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO**, we respectfully submit this testimony in support of **SB0520**, which provides charter counties with a narrowly tailored mechanism to exceed property tax limitations for the express purpose of funding approved public safety budgets.

UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO represents thousands of public service workers across Montgomery County, including Sheriff's Office personnel, 911 Emergency Communications Specialists, Officers in the Department of Corrections, and frontline employees within the Department of Health and Human Services. Our members are the people residents depend on in moments of crisis — answering emergency calls, ensuring public safety in our courts and communities, and providing essential mental health services to vulnerable populations.

SB0520 acknowledges a growing reality faced by charter counties across Maryland: the increasing demand for emergency response, behavioral health services, crisis intervention, and public safety infrastructure often outpaces the rigid revenue limitations imposed by charter tax caps. While these limitations were established with the intent of fiscal restraint, they were not designed to account for the evolving and complex public safety challenges facing modern local governments.

Public safety is not limited to law enforcement and firefighting. It includes:

- The 911 professionals who serve as the first point of contact in emergencies;
- Sheriff's deputies who ensure safety in our courts and transport systems, help domestic violence victims, assist those in mental health crisis, and apprehend fugitives;



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- Health and Human Services personnel who respond to mental health crises, support victims of domestic violence, and protect children and seniors from abuse and neglect.

Each of these functions plays a critical role in preserving the safety and stability of our communities. Yet too often, local governments are forced to choose between maintaining adequate staffing levels in emergency communications centers, investing in behavioral health crisis response, or preserving core services that prevent emergencies from escalating in the first place.

SB0520 offers a responsible and transparent solution by allowing a county's governing body — through a simple public and accountable vote — to exceed charter-imposed property tax limitations when necessary to fund approved public safety expenditures. This authority ensures that counties are not constrained from making timely investments in the workforce, infrastructure, and services required to respond effectively to emergencies and community safety needs.

Importantly, SB0520 does not mandate any tax increase. Rather, it restores flexibility to local elected officials to respond to demonstrable public safety needs without delay, ensuring continuity of operations in critical service areas such as emergency dispatch, judicial security, crisis response, and protective services.

As public safety demands continue to evolve, counties must retain the ability to make strategic investments in the personnel and programs that safeguard their residents. SB0520 provides a balanced framework that respects local governance while ensuring that vital public safety services — including those delivered by our members — are not compromised by outdated fiscal constraints.

For these reasons, UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO urges a **favorable report** on SB0520.

# **SB 520 - MoCo\_Elrich\_FAV (GA 26)**

Uploaded by: Marc Elrich

Position: FAV



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
County Executive

February 24, 2026

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich  
County Executive

RE: Senate Bill 520: *Property Tax – Charter Counties – Application of County Tax  
Limitation on Public Safety Budget*  
Support

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I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 520, *Property Tax – Charter Counties – Application of County Tax Limitation on Public Safety Budget*. Similar to the exception charter counties are afforded for funding the approved budgets of their county boards of education, SB 520 would allow the same for charter counties' approved public safety budgets. Specifically, if a charter county that is subject to limits placed on its authority to set a property tax rate or generate revenue based on the county's charter, by a simple majority vote of its county councilmembers serving at the time, may take an action inconsistent with those limitations to fund the county's public safety budget.

Please note that this legislation is authorizing only. No charter county must do this. It merely provides an additional option to override a charter limit to fund public safety budgets, as current State law allows for board of education budgets.

Like most counties, Montgomery County's operating budget is dominated by two important categories of spending – public education and public safety. The County's total operating budget for fiscal year 2026 is about \$7.6 billion of which 47%, or nearly half, is budgeted for public education and 11% for public safety, reflecting a public view on the importance of supporting education and underwriting the costs of residents feeling safe and secure in their communities.

I have limited discretion over spending for public education given State mandates and a common belief that making the investment necessary to provide a high-quality / high performing public education system is key to economic success. The State has acknowledged this, and it is a key reason why it has granted charter counties that are subject to limitations an "out" via the State law to allow an override of a charter limit that restricts the ability to generate new revenue, as prescribed by the law, in order to support public school budgets.

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Re: Senate Bill 520  
February 24, 2026  
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There are fewer limits on my discretion over my public safety budget, although there are still mandates and on occasion, the passage of State laws that restrict local decision-making authority and are costly. With nearly 50% of my budget already spent, the public safety category of spending must compete for the remaining half of the budget. Similarly, quality of life indicators like low crime rates and stable neighborhoods are “must haves” to support economic success. A robust public safety budget is essential to fund law enforcement, emergency services, and community-based programs that deter and respond to crime. However, there is no similar “out” if a county finds itself with deficient resources to support critical public safety expenditures.

I believe having parallel authority for a charter county to have the same option to override a charter limit to fund an approved public safety budget as that allowed for an approved school board budget is justifiable. I believe that this authority would be rarely exercised, but, if there are no good options, it is another tool in the toolbox that could help ensure that BOTH public school AND public safety budgets would be adequate to meet community needs and to support a quality of life that underpins a successful economy.

cc: Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

**M&A\_FOP35\_Testimony\_SB520\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Roger Manno

Position: FAV



Fraternal Order of Police  
Montgomery County Lodge 35

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TESTIMONY OF LEE HOLLAND  
PRESIDENT, MONTGOMERY COUNTY FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE LODGE 35  
BEFORE THE SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE  
SENATE BILL 520 – FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Guzzone and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35, I submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 520.

This bill gives charter counties limited authority—similar to authority they already have for funding public education—to ensure adequate funding for public safety when local tax caps would otherwise prevent them from meeting core public safety needs. It does not mandate a tax increase and applies only to approved public safety budgets.

For law enforcement, this flexibility is essential to address staffing shortages, training needs, and rising operational costs that directly affect community safety.

Senate Bill 520 includes clear safeguards by requiring that any additional revenue be used exclusively for public safety purposes.

For these reasons, Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35 respectfully urges a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Holland  
President  
Montgomery County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35

**Anne Arundel County \_FAV\_SB520.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tom Ni

Position: FAV



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

# **SB0520 -- Property Tax - Charter Counties - Applic**

Uploaded by: Brian Levine

Position: UNF



**Senate Bill 520 -- Property Tax - Charter Counties - Application of County  
Tax Limitation on Public Safety Budget  
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
February 24, 2026  
Oppose**

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), the voice of business in Metro Maryland, opposes Senate Bill 520 -- *Property Tax - Charter Counties - Application of County Tax Limitation on Public Safety Budget*.

Senate Bill 520 allows the county council of a charter county to raise property tax rates or collect revenues above existing charter limits with only a simple majority vote when funding the county's approved public safety budget. Any property tax revenues collected above the charter-authorized amount, excluding those dedicated to a county board of education budget, must be directed entirely to the public safety budget.

While it is laudable to explore methods to enhance public safety funding, the Chamber opposes granting counties new authority to raise property taxes on residents and businesses. In Montgomery County, for example, the property tax rate was recently increased by 4.7 cents, making the county less affordable at a time when attainable housing is already in short supply.

Additionally, the Chamber is concerned that Senate Bill 520 undermines longstanding charter limitations designed to protect taxpayers by enabling county councils to raise property tax rates with only a simple majority. Expanding this authority weakens fiscal safeguards and exposes residents to unpredictable and potentially excessive tax increases. While supporting public safety is critically important, this bill achieves that by bypassing established charter constraints rather than encouraging responsible and sustainable budgeting.

**For these reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce opposes Senate Bill 520 and respectfully requests an unfavorable report.**

*The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), on behalf of its members, champions the growth of business opportunities, strategic infrastructure investments, and a strong workforce to position Metro Maryland as a premier regional, national, and global business location. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent, non-profit membership organization.*

*Brian Levine | Vice President of Government Affairs  
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