



TESTIMONY TO THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 936 - Montgomery County Public Schools - Local Food Procurement MC 7-26

POSITION: Support

BY: Joan Siegel, Vice President for Advocacy, League of Women Voters of Montgomery County

DATE: February 25, 2026

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) supports the passage of HB0936 Montgomery County Public Schools - Local Food Procurement because it will benefit Montgomery County residents and schools, and it will help realize League policy goals.

When Montgomery County decided to protect and preserve 93,000 acres of farmland and open space after the passage of the 1980 Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space, LWVMC members reached a consensus to support the viability of this county acreage that came to be known as the Agricultural Reserve. The LWVMC has in the intervening 26 years developed public policy positions that allow us to advocate on issues that support the preservation of agricultural land in the Reserve.

The LWVMC supports **HB0936** because it would “support the preservation of agricultural lands; ...support a ‘new’ farmers program with an emphasis on...producing and marketing specialty crops for local markets; and...support county programs that address food insecurity by...providing and encouraging participation in nutrition education programs.” It also advances LWV policy goals because it encourages a system of sustainable, regenerative agricultural production that moves toward an environmentally sound agricultural sector.

HB0936 promises to put into law two significant benefits for Montgomery County residents: it would help build local markets for local farmers thus preserving and protecting farmland from development, and it would provide Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students with fresh, nutritious, and appetizing food. According to the Census of Agriculture, Montgomery County is home to 42 orchards that produce apples, cherries, pears, and plums, and it has vegetable farms that occupy 426 acres and produce everything from cucumbers to tomatoes. MCPS students would benefit not only from fresh fruits and vegetables, but they would also gain insight into the diversity of their community and learn about the importance of the farming community. Healthy food choices at school would help students develop healthy food choices for a lifetime.

Buying locally creates jobs, protects our farmlands from development, and provides added income to our farmers. By selling directly to MCPS, farmers would keep a greater portion of their sales, spend less on marketing their products, and participate in a stable market. By purchasing locally grown foods, MCPS plays a role in helping maintain farmland and open space in its own community.

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County urges your support for HB0936.

League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Maryland, Inc, 27 Wood Lane, Rockville, MD 20850

Tel.: 301-984-9585 * Email: lwwmc@erols.com * Web: lwwmocomd.org

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