



Public Hearing Testimony on the Updated FY 2021 Budget for Fairfax County

Fairfax County, Virginia, April 28, 2020

I am Anu Sahai, and I am the co-president of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. I am submitting this written testimony in overall support of the updated FY 2021 budget but with a request to study cost savings related to Diversion First and the opioid initiatives before deferring funds.

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots, nonpartisan organization made up of volunteers. We have a long history; our organization just celebrated its 100th anniversary. We care deeply about elections and voting as well as other important issues facing our county, especially the health, safety, and financial well-being of county residents during the pandemic.

On behalf of the League, I want to thank the Board of Supervisors and county staff for all of your hard work during this difficult time, and I offer the following five statements.

1. Budget Process. The League supports the county's plan to revisit the budget throughout the fiscal year given the uncertainty of COVID-19 and the corresponding budget assumptions. We appreciate the county's approach toward fiscal responsibility and accountability as well as its efforts to maintain critical services.
2. Elections. We support the necessary funding adjustments for the Office of Elections, especially since it is a big election year. We appreciate the needed maintenance and upgrades of information technology for election activities.
3. Deferred Expansions. Although the League is saddened that this updated budget can not fund the county priorities that were in the prior advertised budget -- such as affordable housing, early childhood initiatives, and the expansion of library hours -- the League totally understands that the county must be fiscally responsible and does not have the tax revenue at this time for these expansions. The League appreciates the county's commitment to revisit funding these priorities after we come out of the crisis.

4. One Fairfax. The League asks the Board of Supervisors to adhere to the One Fairfax social and racial equity policy when making budget cuts, especially given the inequities of minorities' health with COVID-19.
5. Diversion First and Opioids. The League encourages the county to explore cost saving opportunities with the expansion of Diversion First and opioid initiatives before deferring additional funds. For example, in the first two years of Diversion First, 778 people were diverted from potential arrest, which means that the county helped more than one person per day find better options for treatment in the community rather than jail. We ask the county to examine these potential cost savings before making funding deferrals.

We praise the Board of Supervisors and our county employees for their commitment to excellence for our community during this health and economic crisis. We thank you and county staff for making sure that all of our voices are heard!