



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

4026-B Hummer Road · Annandale, Virginia 22003-2403
703-658-9150 · www.lwv-fairfax.org

LWVFA 2016 Advertised Budget Testimony to the Board of Supervisors
April 9, 2015

Good afternoon, Chairman Bulova and members of the Board of Supervisors. I am Helen Kelly, Co-President of the League of Women Voters, speaking on behalf of our members in Fairfax County. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Recent findings that our old voting machines were not secure validated your decision to replace them with new equipment in time for last fall's election. As voters, we are grateful for this move.

We support the following items that you have funded in the 2016 Advertised Budget:

- Two additional positions in the Office of Elections to help keep up with the increasing demands of technology, registration and candidate services. We are also pleased to see that additional money is proposed for FY 2017 to fund the increased cost of the 2016 Presidential election;
- New positions in the Commonwealth Attorney's office;
- Domestic Violence Action Center positions formerly paid for by grants.

We appreciate your community budget presentations. However, they focus almost entirely on the General Fund, which accounts for only 20% of the budget. We'd like to know more about the funds that contribute to the costs and services covered in the other 80% of the budget, including the critical area of transportation.

And we are concerned about these budget categories:

- **Election Officer training and in-person absentee voting hours at satellite locations** - We believe these services are necessary to ensure that all election officers are properly trained, and in this year with so many candidates on the ballot, that voters don't have to wait in long lines, as they did in the 2012 Presidential election;
- **Salary Supplements for Public Defenders** – High turnover in the Office of the Public Defender is due to low salaries and a heavy workload. If public defenders try the same cases in the same courts as the Prosecutors, we believe they should be paid the same salary.
- **Full Funding for the Market Rate Adjustment and Parity in Salary and Benefits** - We ask that you provide this funding for County employees. And we urge you to work to provide parity in compensation and benefits for all County employees, whether they work in the schools, in public safety or in general government.

- **Meals Tax** – We still support this tax as a means to diversify County revenue sources. It could provide up to \$90 million in additional money for property tax relief, school funding and reserves necessary to preserve the County’s bond rating. And at least one-third of this tax would be paid by non-county residents.

Again, we urge you to fund the originally proposed Election Officer training and in-person absentee voting hours at satellite locations. We hope you will consider salary supplements for public defenders. We encourage you to fully fund the market rate adjustment, and to work toward parity in salary and benefits for all County employees. And we support a meals tax as a means to diversify County revenue.

Thank you.