



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA**

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**LWVFA Testimony to BOS regarding changes to the comprehensive plan to encourage the
development of workforce housing**

Good afternoon, and thank you for holding this hearing to solicit citizen input on changes to the comprehensive plan that will allow the county to encourage workforce housing in new high-rise development.

I am Mary Grace Lintz, Acting President of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. I am here today to speak for the League in support of these changes to the comprehensive plan.

The League has been concerned for years about the insufficient amount of affordable housing in Fairfax County. The housing boom since 2000 has simply priced more Fairfax County households out of the real estate market. This has been a nationwide trend: the New York Times reports that housing costs soared from 3 times the national median income in 2000 to 4 ½ times median income in 2006. Most households cannot sustain spending such a high proportion of income for housing.

Even though Fairfax is a wealthy county---the wealthiest in the nation by some measures---not every household has a high income. By definition, half of all households have incomes below the median. We sometimes forget how difficult it is for these individuals to live here. Nurses, teachers, health aids, police officers, firefighters, employees of nonprofits, county staff, the vast majority of young workers just out of college, and young families where one parent isn't working fulltime can all find it hard to find decent and appropriate housing that they can afford.

The League feels it is very desirable for Fairfax County to look for ways to encourage or create quality housing units that are affordable for the working poor. But fostering the development of workforce housing matters for many middle class working individuals and families who struggle to find housing they can afford. We all benefit from having them living here in our community, attending PTA meetings, coaching Little League, and volunteering in their church or their community.

The League applauds this effort by Fairfax County to amend the comprehensive plan. We understand these changes will allow the zoning amendment necessary to encourage the development of some workforce affordable units in new multifamily housing. We know the AHOME organization has labored for some time to develop a workable plan, and we commend them also for the time they---and county staff---have spent to move this initiative forward.

Thank you for the opportunity this afternoon to address the Board on this issue.

Mary Grace Lintz
Acting President, LWVFA