

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA
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LWVFA Testimony to BOS regarding the development of workforce housing in high-rise buildings

Good afternoon, I am Jane Hilder, Action Director of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area. I am here today, at the request of our acting League President, to reaffirm the League's support for this proposal to encourage workforce affordable housing in new high-rise developments .

The League has been concerned for years about the insufficient amount of affordable housing in Fairfax County for those of both low and moderate income. Even middle income households that are just starting out, or that have only one breadwinner, can have a tough time affording housing in Fairfax County. We want to continue to welcome young professionals and young families to the county with a variety of affordable housing types. Nurses, teachers, health aids, police officers, firefighters, federal employees, 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. 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.

Since the hearing on September 24 we have heard complaints that this proposal provides subsidized housing for middle income people. We'd like to point out that this proposal does not call for subsidies, but tries to provide incentives for developers of new high-rise real estate projects to provide some workforce affordable housing in their developments.

We've also heard complaints that this proposal does not address the housing needs of the working poor. 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 encouraging housing for those of moderate income through private development, which this ordinance tries to do, is also a worthy goal.

The League continues to applaud this effort by Fairfax County to encourage workforce housing in multifamily high-rise developments. We neglected to give credit on September 24 to the High-rise Affordability Panel which worked long and hard trying to develop a workable proposal, so we would like to commend them as well as the Supervisors, county staff, and AHOME members who have all worked on this issue.

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