



Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association

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Public Opposition to Ambulance Fee Continues to Increase

Fire and Rescue Commission, Civic Federation and Others Announce Opposition

Rockville, MD (September 26, 2008).--Despite intense lobbying by County officials, including the use of the County Executive's Neighborhood News email service for such lobbying efforts, numerous civic groups and individual residents have voiced opposition to the County Executive's proposal to impose an ambulance fee in Montgomery County. The pace of opposition has increased. In the last three weeks alone, several leading groups have come out against the ambulance fee legislation.

- Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission (FRC). On September 24, 2008, the FRC voted to oppose the Executive's ambulance fee legislation. Under County law, the FRC is charged with ensuring that citizens of Montgomery County receive effective, efficient, and equitable fire prevention and suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services, provided by a service delivery system that encourages and maximizes the efforts of volunteers. The majority of the County Executive appointed members of the Commissioner are Leggett appointees.
- Town of Kensington. On September 22, 2008, the Town of Kensington Council voted to oppose the proposed ambulance fee legislation. The Council took this action after an extensive debate on the potential impact of the legislation, including a presentation by County officials supporting the legislation. Many residents attending the Council hearing expressed strong opposition to an ambulance fee.

- Montgomery County Civic Federation. On September 9, 2008, MCCF re-affirmed its opposition to the ambulance fee legislation. MCCF took this strong stance despite the fact that the County Executive had asked the Federation to re-consider its opposition. MCCF's opposition to ambulance fees has been consistent, dating back to 2004, when a previous ambulance fee proposal was considered.

These organizations join many others in opposing ambulance fee legislation, including: the Montgomery County League of Women Voters, Kensington Coalition, The Town of Chevy Chase, Western County Citizens Advisory Board, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, Greater Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chamber of Commerce and all 19 community-based Fire/Rescue Departments.

Civic organization opposition mirrors that of individual citizens. According to County Council staff, as of September 25, 2008 public comments on the ambulance fee are running 20 to 1 against ambulance fees in Montgomery County.

Even with this overwhelming opposition by the residents of our County, the County Executive continues to push for the fee. The County's own website only shows the proponents views and opinions and fails to mention ANYWHERE that more people spoke in opposition to the fee at the public hearings held, or that the letters, calls and emails received by the County are overwhelmingly opposed to the fee. It's no wonder that the County Executive continues to spend County tax dollars and County employee's time sending out mass emails to the residents of the County trying to garner support for this most unpopular fee.

The Council is likely to take up the ambulance fee legislation sometime in October.

For more information about the ambulance fee legislation, including the views of the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association, please visit the MCVFRA website at www.mcvfra.org.