

FAIR ELECTION FUND COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

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May 9, 2024

Dear County Executive Alsobrooks, County Council Chair Ivey, and members of the County Council:

We thank County Executive Alsobrooks for including \$400,000 for the County's Fair Election Fund in her proposed FY 2025 budget. The members of the Fair Election Fund Commission unanimously ask the County Council to retain this level of funding in the final adopted budget.

While the contribution for FY 2025 is not as much as recommended in our January 25th letter, it is a meaningful amount that, with an equal amount or more appropriated next year, can result in a credible program of public financing for the 2026 elections. This campaign finance reform measure became law in 2018 by an Executive and Council who promised it would be in place for the 2026 elections. We want to work with you to make this happen while recognizing the challenging budget constraints the County faces today.

Here's why this matters: when added to last year's appropriation, this will bring the Fund balance to \$800,000.00, an amount that would, for example, provide full funding for five (5) district council candidates and two (2) at-large candidates. Appropriating as much or more to the Fund next year would have even greater impact, as shown in the following Scenarios below for the Fund amount in 2026:

Scenario A. \$1,250,000 - (4) District Council, (1) At large, (1) County Executive
Scenario B. \$1,600,000 - (6) District Council, (2) At large, (1) County Executive
Scenario C. \$1,825,000 - (9) District Council, (2) At large, (1) County Executive
(County executive candidates @ \$750,000; district council @ \$75,000; at-large @ \$200,000)

These scenarios show that our County's Fair Election Fund, our innovative election finance reform program to which we are mutually committed, can be a success well short of a \$2 million appropriation this year. Never did we mean

Fair Election Fund Commission

c/o Office of Finance, Prince George's County Government
1301 McCormick Drive, Suite 1100, Largo, MD 20774

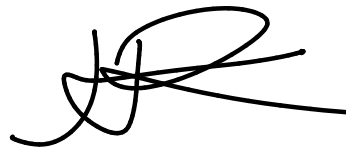
<https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/boards-commissions/fair-election-fund-commission>

to say or imply that the program would be a failure, or should not begin, if the funding were less.

Our former recommendation to fully fund two candidates for each eligible seat was based on the County's two analyses. At this point, we would recommend that the County attempt to achieve Scenario C before the 2026 election to ensure the fidelity of the language and intent of the legislation and program.

Thank you for your ongoing support for election finance reform in Prince George's County and for understanding the importance of retaining a minimum of \$400,000 in the FY2025 budget for the Fair Election Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J.M. Parker', written in a cursive style.

Mrs. J.M. Parker, Chair
Fair Elections Fund Commission

cc: Stanley A. Earley, Director
Office of Management and Budget

Jennifer A. Jenkins, Administrator
Prince George's County Council