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Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Budget Public Hearing (Session II), Thursday, February 27, 2025

Date Thursday, February 27, 2025
Place Board Room, First Floor, Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg, Virginia
Length 1h 41m (video)

- Official meeting video (county, Granicus): <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7884>
- Meeting page: <https://loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7884>

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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-11. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:01:15] actions. Loudoun County Board of Supervisors of Budget Public Hearing, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. This room has a hearing loop. If you need hearing assistance, switch your hearing aids to telecoil mode. If you need a headset, we have those available as well. Please see the clerk to request one. This public hearing is to allow members of

[00:01:51] the public to address the board on the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1st, 2025 and ending June 30th, 2026, which is also called the FY26 proposed budget and the proposed tax rates on real and personal property for tax year 2025 beginning January 1st, 2025 and ending December 31st, 2025. This is actually a reconvening of the recessed three o'clock public hearing that we had today for comment on the proposed budget. Any members of the public may address the board at only one session. Members of the public wishing to speak at this public

[00:02:30] hearing and have not already done so, please sign up with the clerk to my left. All members of the public who have signed up to speak will be allotted two and a half minutes. If you're in the boardroom, we ask when your name is called, please come to the podium and state your name for the record. The timer on the podium will indicate your remaining time. When your time is expired, please yield the floor to the next speaker. Per the board's rules of order, when a member of the public has provided comment in a language other than english and chooses to use an interpreter the member of the public and the

interpreter will each have a minimum of two and a half minutes but no more than three minutes except as otherwise noted if you're providing your

[00:03:09] comments via phone i ask that you use a stopwatch to track your time i will monitor your time in the boardroom as well and notify you when your time is expired when taking public input i will first ask if there's anyone in the boardroom wishing to speak and then i will go to the moderator and ask if there are any speakers online please note that there is a slight delay between the broadcast and the boardroom although not all board members are present and because we're taking no actions we do not need a quorum here tonight however i've been assured by the other members of the board that they will review the video recordings of the budget public hearings

[00:03:44] and listen to the public comments on the budget our first speaker is john kefalotis followed by julius reynolds followed by amanda kaufran good evening good evening thank you for the opportunity to be here my name is john kefalotis i moved to loudon county in 2017 for most of my life i've

[00:04:21] ignored local politics that was before 2024 when i noticed my property taxes had risen 34 percent over a three-year period i wondered how that happened with my curiosity peaked i went to the county website and downloaded 10 years of budget data what i found was shocking the data indicated over the period 2015 to 2025 local taxation collections increased 134 percent even though inflation and population growth were approximately 36 and 21 percent over that period

[00:04:58] respectively it seems fairly clear that the board's spending habits are excessive the last two years are worse. The proposed FY 2026 budget increases local tax collections by 10.93 percent over 2025.

[00:05:16] This is after a 13.2 increase in local tax collections from FY 24 to FY 25. Under the proposed FY 2026 budget, the compound growth in local tax collections is a whopping 26 percent over the two-year period. The same period during which population growth is barely one percent per year and inflation is approximately three percent year per year. Is this reasonable? I don't think so. Profligate is the only term I can find to describe this board's spending. This profligacy

[00:05:53] is a result of a budgeting process in which the board passes a budget resolution early in the budget development process that gives the county administrator budget development guidance based on tax rate. It's hard to understand why this guidance wouldn't be based on inflation and population growth. Failure to explicitly constrain spending growth will produce government inefficiency and unaffordable government, the very things that the national government is currently being forced to deal with. For the sake of Loudoun County taxpayers, please change course. This course change

[00:06:29] could begin by sending the FY 2026 budget back to the drawing board. Thank very much thank you sir next up is julius reynolds followed by amanda coffran followed by kirsten langhorne good evening i'm dr julius reynolds i'm the chair of sdiu virginia 512. it's my pleasure to hopefully be with you the last time uh to talk about benefits and wages and working conditions for loudon county employees but i'd like to leave you with this parable two fishes were in the water two young fishes were in the water they were swimming downstream and came upon an older fish

[00:07:06] You know, the fish asked him, how was the water? And they looked at him quizzically. And as they swam downstream 50 yards, they turned to each other and they said, what the heck is water? You see, they have forgot about the thing that they have lived and that gave them life.

[00:07:23] They have forgotten become so complacent that they forgot that the water gave them life. And so I'm here to proudly exclaim that we have a tentative agreement that we've ironed out with county management that will solve some of our water problems here in Loudoun County for our workers and bring a sense of dignity, compassion, and humanity for the first time to Loudoun County employees here in Loudoun.

[00:07:45] So I'm asking you to pass this contract and ratify this contract with all expediency so it can make it into the fiscal year 26-27 budget and so Loudoun County workers can finally enjoy compassion, dignity, and respect at their respective jobs.

[00:08:04] and life as we know it will be different going forward, and I couldn't be more happier. The only thing that makes me a little bit more happy than this is that I won't have to stand here next year with hat in hand begging and doing this song and dance for we will have a contract for the next three years that will benefit county employees and improve their life, and not only that, improve the quality of life here in Loudoun as we know it.

[00:08:25] Finally, today I stand alongside my good friends at New Virginia Majority to advocate for the establishment but local housing voucher program. This program would assist families grappling with rent costs, allowing them to maintain their homes. Additionally, I urge you to support funding for after school programs that provide safe alternatives for youth, preventing them from facing unsafe situations that can ultimately lead to a cycle of challenges that may require restorative care.

[00:08:54] The opportunity is before us, a chance to take proactive measures to avert potential trauma for our youth and preserve the legacy of Loudoun County. future is in our hands. What will you choose to do to positively influence our community?

[00:09:10] Thank you for your attention and I sincerely urge you to invest in our future so that together we can proudly affirm our Loudoun identity. Thank you for your time. Thank you Mr. Reynolds. Next up is Amanda Coffran followed by Kirsten Langhorne followed by Ashie Mahotra. Thank you Vice Chair Turner and members of the Board of Supervisors for this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed budget. My name is Amanda Coffran and I am the Loudoun Director for the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance, or NAVAJA, as we refer to ourselves.

[00:09:43] First of all, I want to say thank you for the important steps you've already taken to address our housing crisis. Solving this regional problem takes a genuine commitment from our elected officials and local government, and you have demonstrated that this is a priority. Housing advocates have been asking for the dedication of a full penny of the real property tax to the housing fund, and you listened.

[00:10:02] Dedicating \$17.3 million to the housing fund will make a real difference in reaching our housing goals. Navaja supports funding in the budget for positions within the Departments of Planning and Zoning and Housing and Community Development to ensure that we have the necessary programs, resources and development projects moving through the pipeline to meet our housing goals.

[00:10:20] However, I am concerned that the proposed budget leaves behind many of our most vulnerable neighbors. Homelessness is increasing in Loudoun. Our nonprofit providers are supporting more residents who are chronically homeless or struggling with serious mental illnesses. They need sufficient funding and resources to do this work.

[00:10:37] Please consider increasing nonprofit grant funding for human services. And I did hear Chair Randall's comments at the end of the 3 p.m. hearing about working with the nonprofit human services community and wanted to acknowledge and thank you all for that. Please also consider prioritizing our need for an expanded hypothermia and family shelters.

[00:10:55] We cannot solve homelessness without more permanent supportive housing. We need homes that are not only affordable for this population, but also include necessary wraparound support services. We need the financial and human resources to make that happen. Options for working families earning 40% or below of the area median income are extremely limited.

[00:11:13] Keeping families stably housed in their communities is critical and requires local solutions including rental assistance, eviction prevention programs, and a commitment to building and preserving more homes for families at this particular income level. In a budget year with many successes to celebrate, let's not leave behind those who are most at risk. Loudoun can be and should be a community with safe, stable, affordable homes for all. Thank you. Thank you, you, Ms. Kern. Next up is Kirsten Langhorne, followed by Ashi Mahotra, followed by Carolyn Koch. Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you all and reiterate some of the

[00:11:49] comments just made. My name is Kirsten Langhorne, and I'd like to specifically speak about the hypothermia shelter. I speak to you tonight as someone who lost a family member to homelessness and exposure, and I also worked at the Loudoun Homeless Services Center during the season of 22-23. I know our Loudoun community supports the county's efforts to provide this life-saving service. You all have probably received calls from concerned community members worried about an individual out in the cold on a winter's night. The program is necessary and it's essential that it is offered. The year that I was at the Homeless Services Center, it was the first year during

[00:12:29] which the eviction moratorium resulted in numerous households finding themselves without stable housing. It also coincided with the opening of the metro and the small but steady stream of individuals who landed in the county without places to spend the night. At the time, the hypothermia shelter was housed in the main lobby of the existing Homeless Services Center. I know some of you at least have seen that site. On many nights, we sheltered twice as many participants as in previous years. There were far too many bodies using the facility, creating an environment ripe for the spread of both disease and trauma. The worst impacts were borne by the children who

[00:13:06] shared the lobby and dining room with dozens of nightly participants. These were kids already traumatized by the incredible challenges homelessness imposes on everyone. And during those winter months, they also contended with the kinds of situations that occur when adults who suffer from their own incredible challenges are unable to consistently regulate their behaviors.

[00:13:28] I was thrilled to learn that there was a solution the following year after I left when the hypothermia shelter moved into the youth shelter on Meadowview Court. It was convenient to the Homeless Services Center, and it provided an appropriate and safe place for the nightly hypothermia participants.

[00:13:49] I also know that staff has been working diligently to try to come up with a more permanent solution, especially given that the youth shelter will no longer be available for this purpose. I want to ask you to do everything you can to support that effort and to support a permanent solution and my 10 seconds left I also want to drill down on the importance of a family shelter in the coming years kids should

not have to share that specific building that was built for a much smaller population with every demographic that requires this life-saving service thank you so

[00:14:24] so much. Thank you, Ms. Langhorne. Next up is Ashi Marotra, followed by Carolyn Koch, followed by Kate Campbell. Good evening. My name is Ashi Marotra. I'm one of the public defenders at the Loudoun County Public Defender's Office. I reside in the Little River District with my wife and two kids. I am here to provide some comments in support of our office's request that this board continue to support our office by raising supplements and allocating additional resources to fund additional staffing positions i had intended to provide some anecdotes but being a lawyer i knew

[00:15:01] it would just take too much time and time's ticking right here i see so i'm going to skip the first one which was supposed to be a story about one of my clients who's on our recovery court docket but i will tell you all supervisors that our public defender's office are a regular and integral part of each of our three specialty dockets in this county the recovery court the veterans docket and the behavioral health docket our responsibilities on those dockets include duties that are separate and apart from our regular day-to-day representation of accused

[00:15:36] persons they are obligations that we have not been provided any additional resources for but we that but that we nevertheless embrace i will give you the short second story which is that several weeks ago around the holidays i was advocating for clients on the bond docket i was handling eight of the nine motions on the docket the court decided to proceed in alphabetical order my first case gets called i handle it my second case gets called and so on and so forth somewhere between the fourth and fifth case the there was a illustrious attorney who had the only other bond

[00:16:13] motion on the docket he turns to me and he says word in words or substance boy you have a lot of cases. Supervisor Kirshner isn't here. It was Supervisor Kirshner. And he wasn't lying.

[00:16:32] What I'll say is I'll encourage you all to spend a day, if you so choose, in the shoes of a public defender by shadowing one of us to see firsthand the work that we do for our community. Our attorneys, in addition to our regularly assigned cases, have a regular presence on the arraignment or first appearance docket in every court in Loudoun County.

[00:16:54] In closing, I'll say we don't just represent bad guys. We have the privilege of humanizing the accused. Everyone has a story, and we meet our clients where they are, no matter who they are, how they are, without reservation, because it is the right thing to do.

[00:17:18] Please accept my sincere thanks for your support. Thank you. Thank you for your time. And thank you for your time. Next up is Carolyn Koch, followed by Kate Campbell, followed by Ellie Shaheen. Hi, my name is Carolyn Cook, and I'm Assistant Public Defender 1 at the Loudoun County Public Defender's Office.

[00:17:44] I moved to Leesburg three and a half years ago after securing my dream job as an Assistant Public Defender. When I was 16, a loved one of mine was wrongly accused of a crime. From then on, I knew I wanted to be a public defender. To reach this goal, I've worked countless unpaid internships, incurred \$100,000 in student loan debt, and I drive my father-in-law's car with 302,000 miles on it.

[00:18:11] But as a 25-year-old about to start her dream job, none of that mattered to me. I only wanted to help people, people accused of crimes, but also their families. Remember, the people my office serves are our neighbors, our community members, and our loved ones.

[00:18:27] They deserve representation from an office that is adequately staffed and funded. Fortunately and out of necessity, my husband works approximately 80 hours a week to compensate for my income. We were lucky enough to buy a townhouse in Leesburg in 2022, but only because of his sacrifices. In the time I've worked at the public defender's office, three and a half years, he has gotten multiple promotions with pay raises in the private sector. Because of the way the state has structured my office, I've received none. Instead, I've babysat, tutored, and dog-walked

[00:19:03] to compensate my income as an attorney this is a choice that public defender ones have to make and i've seen two of my colleagues leave because of it a pay supplement is the only way to retain talented attorneys in the lower and mid-level positions as you can imagine i'm feeling very stuck i'm advocating for these supplements because i'm turning 29 next month my family and friends often ask me when i'm going to start a family of my own it's gut-wrenching to feel like i have to decide between supporting my clients and their families or being in a place where i can financially

[00:19:38] afford my own i want to conclude by thanking you all for your time and providing our current supplements i appreciate you considering our requests and raising them thank you thank you miss cook and thanks to mr marotra before you for your service to the county kate campbell followed by ellie shaheen followed by john manson good evening my name is kate campbell i've been a a service coordinator with Loudoun County MHSADS for almost seven years. I provide case management services to roughly 140 Loudoun County residents who depend on psychiatric medication management

[00:20:13] to remain stable, independent, and contributing members of this community. I'm also the vice chair of SEIU 512 Loudoun, and I have the honor of serving on the contract negotiating team. Our team was extraordinary with a wide range of knowledge, experience, and skills. We put in countless hours of personal time to develop this tentative contract agreement, and I'm asking for your support to ratify and fully fund our contract. I learned so much through this process, but most importantly, I learned that every benefit, policy, or procedure is, quote, subject to the discretion of the department director. Essentially, everything that is good about working for Loudoun County

[00:20:52] is subject to change depending on the whims of upper-level management that has no knowledge or interest in the work I'm doing daily. This contract can help change that. Just today, management and human resources reminded me that the job descriptions are deliberately vague so management can control our working conditions. Loudoun County workers have no rights and no respect without this contract. I'm also here to discuss the affordable housing crisis in Loudoun County. I can't afford to live in Loudoun County. I live roughly an hour away in West Virginia.

[00:21:26] Most of the 140 people on my caseload live with housing and food insecurities. Most of the people I work with are employed, they have families, they pay taxes, and they vote. They still are not able to make ends meet. With many of them earning too much money to qualify for public assistance, but not enough money to rent or buy a home.

[00:21:48] With average rents near \$3,000 for a two-bedroom apartment, a household needs to earn at least \$100,000 a year. I don't earn \$100,000 a year, even with the wage increases included in the collective bargaining agreement. Loudoun County workers deserve a living wage and affordable housing opportunities.

[00:22:05] Thank you. Thank you for your comments. Ellie Shaheen, followed by John Manson, followed by Adam Pugliard. Good evening. Good evening. Thank you to the supervisors for hearing from my office

today.

[00:22:21] My name is Ellie Shaheen, and I'm an attorney at the Public Defender's Office in Loudoun County. I grew up in Loudoun, and I graduated from Stonebridge High School. About seven years ago when I graduated law school, I was lucky enough to be able to start my career here. Although we're getting to a point where I don't know if that's going to continue to be an option without the board approving the request that we have made.

[00:22:43] Currently, because of a lack of funds available to us from the state, there are no promotional opportunities within our office. And the only way that I've been able to increase my salary significantly is with the assistance of the board. And the only reason I've been able to remain in my career is because of the assistance from the board. While my situation is shared by several of my colleagues, my perspective is relatively unique in that my husband is a Commonwealth attorney in another jurisdiction.

[00:23:09] He has only six months of experience on me. However, he makes \$54,000 more than I do annually just on his base salary. In the last four years, he's been promoted three positions and has increased his salary by 67%. And during that entire time, I have remained an assistant public defender, too.

[00:23:27] Despite our very shared love of public service, it just doesn't seem feasible for both of us to remain within this career and to also start the family that we very much want. The most meaningful part of my job is that I have the privilege to work with children. I am one of the very few attorneys in our office that handle juvenile matters.

[00:23:46] And the children that come through our system are the most vulnerable of the population that exist, reside, go to school in Loudoun County. Because of the work that my office does and have been able to do despite some of the instability with some of the other agencies that we work with regularly, we have been able to identify serious, serious needs in the lives of children, which include utilizing the resources of Child Protective Services and the Department of Family Services, identifying potential victims of human trafficking, children who are experiencing victims of substance abuse, as well as domestic violence.

[00:24:21] My job is to identify that trauma, to find the services and determine the best way to represent their needs. Our juvenile court regularly references our dire need and limitations because of a lack of guardians ad litem. That does then put the burden on our office to then do a job that is outside of our requirements or outside of the scope of our practice to help these children to make sure they get the services that they so desperately need.

[00:24:44] I do wanna thank the board for giving us the supplements that we have received over the past few years. It is the only reason that I've been able to remain in this position. Thank you. - Thank you for your comments. - Thank you, sir. and followed by Adam Fouillard, followed by Nehrman Qureshi.

[00:25:01] How do you follow that? Good evening, members of the board. I'm an investigator at the Public Defender's Office, one of two supporting 12 attorneys. Just this afternoon, I was at the jail with an interpreter, and tomorrow and well into next week, I'll be in the field doing multiple interviews that require interpretive services.

[00:25:22] The ability to have an in-house interpreter is absolutely critical to our mission of providing quality investigative information to our attorneys. The alternative, an old guy fumbling with the Google

Translate trying to conduct an interview.

[00:25:39] Given the board's familiarity with data centers, I'm sure that it's no surprise that the amount of data collected on an individual through their cars, their cell phones, health trackers, personal computers, any other device it's immense and it's stored on those devices and at data providers much of that data at rest is swept up into an investigation so again picture this the old guy wading through

[00:26:12] from a very memorable case over 25 000 documents of discovery over a terabyte of information They're looking at that old guy. A discovery specialist will help us organize and synchronize discovery data so that the investigators can focus on other lines of inquiry that could be incredibly helpful to the case. And in this job, one of the things, truly one of the things that keeps me up at night and worrying is that I may have missed something in discovery. Truly that one piece of exculpatory or mitigating information that I could have gotten to the attorney to make

[00:26:52] a difference. And the best for last, our mitigation specialist, Ms. Kelly Williams. She's a one-person band, and often we're called upon to assist her with tracking down medical documentation and other such things for mitigation. And again, if I'm 10 miles wide and half an inch deep, I can't do those investigative services that are so important for our attorneys. Those are my professional observations.

[00:27:15] On a personal note, I'm a retired United States Marine, and subsequent to my retirement, I worked in several federal law enforcement positions in operational and staff roles. And I will tell you that I have felt no more like a Marine than working side by side with a person so dedicated to their public service mission than in this office here.

[00:27:38] And I truly consider your public defender's office, your judicial Marines, and I hope that you do too. Thank you for your time and consideration of our request. Thank you, sir, and thank you for your service to the county, and thank you, Ms. Shaheen, for your service to the county. Adam Pulliard, followed by Nehriman Qureshi, followed by Eric Kamalas.

[00:27:57] Good evening. My name is Adam Pulliard. I'm an attorney with the Public Defender's Office as well. And in spite of what Mr. Manson just said, he's not that old. I do want to piggyback off of one thing that he said, which is that we have access to interpretation services through the courts.

[00:28:14] That access is limited to two hours on weekdays. The limitation is between 3 and 5 o'clock, which means that at the only real time that we have to access some of our clients at the jail when we are not otherwise in court dockets, we are utilizing that on exclusively our Spanish-speaking clients.

[00:28:34] From a structural perspective, when we have a major case with a Spanish-speaking client, which is almost always the case for almost every attorney in the office at any given time, and there are 12 of us, my personal preference is to use one hour blocks at least once a week with an interpreter so that I can build the sort of rapport that takes twice as long when everything needs to be said twice once in English and once in Spanish in both directions that limitation is limiting our ability to represent our clients in a world where the demographics are incredibly changing I in Loudoun County as a resident of the Stockton District it's something that we are seeing on a day-to-day

[00:29:13] basis. That's not what I was going to say. I was just piggybacking off of John, so I apologize. The thing that I wanted to talk about separately was our involvement in community organizations outside of the recovery dockets, the mental health docket, the veterans docket. We're also involved in things like the

Disability and Justice Coalition, the Community Criminal Justice Board, the bench bars, which allow us to shape practice in the community that we live in.

[00:29:37] Our voices are essential on those because we are focused on rehabilitation, treatment and a lack of recidivism on those this board this county needs our voices in those dockets and we also become the resource for other individuals on those dockets in the past 24 hours two people who i know from those dockets reached out to me one of whom is an individual who works with the community justice program community justice with the community corrections program to talk to me about the need to roll out a new pretrial risk assessment of which he asked me

[00:30:12] to be a part of a coalition to work on which we will be happy to be a part of and separately a detective who was involved in one of those reached out about a missing young person not a juvenile last night because he knew that we were a resource in order to help assist finding that person so i thank you for your time i thank you for your support thank you sir next up Mr. Nariman Qureshi, followed by Eric Kamalas, followed by Theo Stamatis.

[00:30:42] Kind of short. Good evening, board members. My name is Nariman. I am an employee of Loudoun County Public Schools. I have worked for five years as a family liaison and currently work as a traveling registrar of sorts within Loudoun County Public Schools.

[00:31:01] I'm here to support the housing voucher program and the after-school program. I will speak completely from personal experience having worked with families that live in this county, work in this county, support this county, but the county isn't able to house them appropriately.

[00:31:21] The county isn't able to provide food for their children. The county isn't able to support them when they need to go to work and they can't afford to have a babysitter. It is imperative and truly a beautiful opportunity for this board to ensure that our families that already reside in Loudoun County are able to do so.

[00:31:41] It is imperative that we ensure the people that live here that we are one, that we belong together. I come from a third world country, and I often tell my friends, Loudoun County is turning into a third world country because of the severe income disparity that you see here.

[00:32:03] So this truly is an opportunity for us to understand what the needs of the county are, what the needs of more than 40% of your population are, and really to keep it together. I really hope that the board will vote for this, will vote for these vouchers, will vote for these after-school programs to ensure that our families stay where they are, to ensure that the children that go to our schools feel safe and feel secure and don't have to house hop every year.

[00:32:34] It is imperative that we teach our children to love our county. Thank you very much. Thank you, ma'am. Eric Kamalis, followed by Theo Stamanis, followed by Kyle Barnes. Mr. Kamalas. Good afternoon. My name is Eric and I'm a leader of the New Virginia Majority and a parent from the Sterling area. As a parent with a student and along the county

[00:33:13] school, it will be great help to implement support programs in the school as well as after school extracurricular programs. With the current increase in the cost of living, and inflation, high rental costs. It is impossible for us to afford the current programs afforded by the county, which for many in our community are expensive.

[00:33:37] One way to support educational innovation to go to a higher level in this county will be to see the implementation of free after-school programs, giving low-income children the opportunity to develop skilled attitudes and educational focus build toward a good society with the necessary resources without cost being an impediment to being able to give the space our children deserve in extracurricular programs. We hope that our supervisors can support and ensure the implementation

[00:34:16] of program for our children and the 2025 school budget. Thank you. Thank you. Next up Theo Stamatis followed by Kyle Barnes, followed by Claudia Quezada. Good evening, Vice Chair Turner, members of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. For the record, Theo Stamatis, Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce. It's a privilege to address you this evening on behalf of more than a thousand businesses and other employers that comprise of the chamber's membership. This evening, I would like to address three areas of the proposed fiscal year 2026 budget that align with the chamber's priorities. First, I'd like to express

[00:34:53] the Chamber's support for continued investment to address Loudoun's housing affordability crisis. The Chamber appreciates the Board's continued efforts in expanding its existing housing initiatives and programs to help develop more attainable housing in the future. Loudoun needs housing that is attainable for our workforce at all income levels, particularly those earning at or below Loudoun's average median income. This is a sizable portion of our population, include small business owners, teachers, first responders, healthcare workers, service industry, employees. I want to thank the board for dedicating the necessary energy and resources

[00:35:29] to strengthen our housing trust fund, supporting our nonprofits and other efforts to meet the goals of our county. Secondly, I would like to express our support for the Loudoun Human Services Network proposal to increase the budget allocation for the nonprofit competitive grant process by 20%.

[00:35:48] We believe Loudoun's nonprofit sector is an essential component of our quality of life and prosperity. As Loudoun's population continues to grow in size and complexity, so does the demand for the services our nonprofit partners provide.

[00:36:05] County funding should match that growth in service demand. I will conclude by offering our appreciation for the contributions to Loudoun's economy, community, and fiscal strength that comes from our data centers. As noted in the recent budget presentation, Loudoun can fully fund most of its priorities while providing struggling homeowners with needed real and personal property tax relief thanks to the unprecedented level of tax revenues generated by data centers.

[00:36:33] Investing those unprecedented revenues in Loudoun's most pressing needs, including attainable housing and supporting the work of our nonprofit community, is essential. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the board for your service to our county. Thank you, sir. Kyle Barnes, followed by Claudia Quezada, followed by Maria Rojas.

[00:36:57] Good evening, members of the board. My name is Kyle Barnes. I'm a former public defender, and I wanted to come here and tell my story a little bit and kind of bounce off some of the stories that my colleagues gave because I think that it's important to support the measures that are currently in the budget for the increase of resources to the Loudoun County Public Defender's Office.

[00:37:21] I'll tell this board that in my time, I went to law school because I knew I wanted to be a public defender. I interned in public defender's offices exclusively in northern Virginia because I knew I wanted

to be a public defender. But ultimately, it became very difficult for me to balance my own personal goals with the goals of my career.

[00:37:43] And obviously, the supplements the board has given us has been tremendously useful. But I think it's also important to note that a public defender is not just one job. This is multiple jobs. We've all seen my cousin Vinny. We know the kind of constitutional aspects, and that's vitally important, but often overlooked to the kind of softer aspects of a public defender's office.

[00:38:05] And ultimately, what we are is a triage unit for social work. A lot of our clients are extremely vulnerable, but financially, they have untreated mental health issues, untreated addiction issues, past trauma. And what our office does is not necessarily provide the services that assist these clients, but get them in touch with the services that do.

[00:38:23] Get them on the road to success, both during the pendency of their case as well as afterwards. Vitally important, not only to the health of our clients, but to the health of this community. Additionally, we are unlicensed therapists. We have to hear, and it's important for us to hear, our client's stories, the trauma that they've endured.

[00:38:42] And I'll tell this board, I have heard truly horrific and unspeakable things that have happened to my clients over the course of their lives. And I carry that with me. And it's a difficult job. And during the first 18 months that I was a public defender, nine of my clients died that I knew of, one of which was particularly traumatic, and it'll follow me for the rest of my life.

[00:39:05] But I want this board to remember that this job is not an easy one, and it's incredibly emotionally trying. So while it was my dream to be a public defender, ultimately that was the dream of a single man, and now I'm looking to get married, and even with my fiancé's income, I couldn't afford a house in Loudoun County, I couldn't afford child care in Loudoun County, and I couldn't afford to pay off my student loans all at the same time.

[00:39:32] So these supplements will certainly be helpful, not only for our public defender's offices, but also for the community, and I thank you for my time. Thank you. Next up is Claudia Quezada, followed by Maria Rojas, followed by Hernan Caravantes.

[00:40:19] Estoy aquí para reconocer el impacto que los programas de vivienda están teniendo en nuestras familias ante los desafíos de alto costo en la renta y bajos ingresos.

[00:40:35] Para mi ver que muchas familias se están beneficiando y tienen un gran significado porque conozco muchas dificultades que muchas familias de clase trabajadora sufren y los programas están siendo un alivio para la economía familiar.

[00:40:53] Sin embargo, los programas son temporales y los desafíos persisten. Es por eso que me uno al llamado de mi comunidad para que se apruebe el fondo de 10 millones de presupuesto para programas de vivienda, especialmente un programa de vales de vivienda y rebajas de la renta.

[00:41:20] Como todo padre, nuestro sueño es que nuestros hijos estudien la universidad, Pero es difícil cubrir los gastos escolares cuando hay que pagar un alquiler tan alto. Me siento muy positiva y con esperanza de poder contar con su apoyo. Gracias.

[00:41:41] Gracias. My name is Claudia Quesada. I am a member of the new Virginia majority. I'm originally from Mexico, but I have lived in the county for 26 years.

[00:41:56] I currently live in the Leesburg apartments, and I have worked 28 years in a house cleaning company. I am here to speak about the impact that the housing programs are having on our families in the face of the dual challenges of high rent costs and low incomes.

[00:42:16] For me, seeing that many families are benefiting from these programs has been really meaningful because I know of the many difficulties that many working class families suffer, and the programs are a relief of the family's finances. However, these programs are temporary and challenges persist.

[00:42:36] This is why I joined the call of my community for the approval of a \$10 million fund for housing programs, especially a housing voucher and rent reduction program. Like all parents, our dream is our kids go to college, But it's difficult to cover the cost of college when we have to pay rent this high I am positive and hopeful that I can count on your support. Thank you. Thank you very much Maria Rojas Followed by Hernan Carabantes followed by Catalina Leon

[00:43:12] Buenas noches Representantes de la Junta de Supervisores de Nuestro Condado Me es grato estar nuevamente aquí ante ustedes. Mi nombre es Maria Rojas I have been a resident for many years in this county.

[00:43:35] I am a member of the New York City of Virginia. I work six days a week. Since I arrived in this country, I have been part of the worker class that we work hard to get ahead and support our families.

[00:43:52] We are good people. However, now that my husband and I are of third age, we have no access to accessible houses for us, apart from the injustices that we have often suffered.

[00:44:11] For example, I received a letter of no renovation in the minor apartments, only because I declared a bill that was imposed on the bill. Despite that injustice, I had to leave the apartment and move to a small apartment, and put my things in storage where I'm paying a lot of money a month.

[00:44:37] I tried to apply the assistance of the rent, but they were denied because I had a high salary when my salary is below the median income of the area. Nosotros como clase trabajadora que contribuimos a la economía de este condado, consideramos justo que hayan programas de vivienda accesibles para nosotros.

[00:45:03] Es por eso que vengo a solicitarles que aprueben el fondo de 10 millones para los programas de vivienda. Gracias. Gracias. Good evening, representantes of our County Board of Supervisors. I am pleased to be here before you again.

[00:45:21] My name is Maria Rojas. I've been a resident of this county for many years. I'm a member of the New Virginia Majority. I work at Target six days a week. Since I came to this country, I've been part of the working class who work hard to get ahead and support our families.

[00:45:39] We are good people. However, now that both my husband and I are seniors, we feel that we have little access to affordable housing for us. in addition to the injustices that we often suffer. For example, I received a letter for non-renewal at the Manor Apartments only because I claimed a mandatory bill that was imposed on us.

[00:46:04] As much as I fought against the injustice, I had to leave the apartment and move to a small room and put my things in storage unit where I'm paying a lot of money each month. I tried to apply for

rental assistance, but they denied me because I had a high salary where my salary is below the median income of the area.

[00:46:27] We, as working class people who contribute to the economy of this county, consider it fair that there are affordable housing programs for us. That's why I come to ask you to approve the \$10 million fund for housing programs.

[00:46:43] Thank you. Thank you. hernan carabantes followed by catalina leon followed by lydia moreno hernan carabantes

[00:47:18] going once going twice uh okay then catalina leon going once going twice lydia moreno thank you my name is lydia moreno and i am sorry form aparte de la nueva mayoria de virginia Well, there are certain benefits for the skilled class that has problems with rentals.

[00:47:41] There is also part of abuse by the owners of the apartments, that sometimes cobrates even two increases of the rent per year. They don't want to give, in some places they don't want to give maintenance to the apartments, they don't even rent with insects and other animals.

[00:48:04] Entonces ellos se niegan, que dice que tiene que salir del bolsillo de cada uno, pero no es así. Uno cuando renta una propiedad tiene que darla en forma adecuada, que esté apta para que la gente viva con dignidad. Porque mayormente son personas que tienen dos, tres, hasta cinco hijos o más quizás.

[00:48:25] Y entonces tienen dos, tres trabajos. Okay, so, well, I always have a little bit more. Yes, people have two to three jobs to be able to keep their families.

[00:48:41] There are mothers solteras, and so, we are asking help so that the people can solve the rent.

[00:48:53] Thank you very much.

[00:49:33] Good evening, Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. My name is Lydia Moreno. I've been a resident of this county for 24 years, especially here in the town of Leesburg. Since I came to this country, I have dedicated my life to my work. I have had up to two jobs in order to raise my three children. I've been contributing to the economy, and I've been paying my taxes.

[00:49:57] Now that I'm a senior citizen, one of my challenges is to maintain my house and to be able to pay for it as an affordable cost. I know more than anyone the challenges the working class community lives with in terms of housing.

[00:50:13] We are forced to rent places with poor maintenance, full of pests, which are with very high rents while earning a very low salary. We also suffer from other issues such as health care, for example. they just reduced my medicaid that seems unfair to me after so many years of hard work that's why i consider it important that this county invest in programs for us as a working class that's why i ask you to approve 10 million dollars in the budget for housing voucher and rental assistance

[00:50:48] programs thank you thank you next up is douglas salvando followed by alejandra hernandez followed by Edick Aleman. Douglas Zavando. Good evening, sir.

[00:51:45] El trabajo muchas veces debido al clima baja y eso nos perjudica sobre todo al acceso a la vivienda. Las rentas son muy altas y poca accesibilidad adquirir una vivienda a bajo costo.

[00:52:01] Yo tuve un apartamento pero necesitaba el apoyo de un amigo para poder adquirirlo porque solo con mi salario no era posible. En esta temporada, el trabajo baja. Me he quedado muchos días sin

trabajo.

[00:52:18] Es ahí donde veo la necesidad de aplicar a programas de vivienda. Por eso estoy aquí para solicitarles su aprobación de 10 millones para los programas de la renta y prevención de desalojo.

[00:52:35] Gracias. Gracias. Good evening, members of the Board of Supervisors. My name is Douglas Obando. I am a member of the new Virginia majority. I have lived here in Leesburg for 17 years.

[00:52:51] Since coming to the area, I have dedicated myself to remodeling. For me, as part of the working class, being a humble person from El Salvador, I have always worked hard. However, my salary remains below the median income of the area.

[00:53:07] There are also fewer opportunities for work whenever during the cold season. hurts especially when it comes to access to housing. The rents are very high and there's little accessibility to acquire a home at a lower cost. I had an apartment where I needed the support of a friend to be able to rent because only with my salary it was not possible. During the cold season I have been without work for many days. This is why I need to apply for housing programs. That's why I am here to request your approval of the \$10 million for rental assistance and eviction prevention programs.

[00:53:46] Thank you. Thank you. Next up is Alejandro Hernandez, followed by Edek Alamon, followed by Jefferson Riubas. Good evening, members of board supervisors. Obviously, English is not my first language, so I will go ahead and do it in Spanish.

[00:54:02] As much as I want to try, I just want you to get the clear message of what we want to say today. My name is Alejandra Hernández, I am a member of the New York City of Virginia, a organization that helps identify the needs of the community and the class of the trabajadores to fight for the stability and justice in a country of immigrants.

[00:54:19] The housing is one of the biggest needs of the community of immigrants, of the class of the trabajadores today, because many of us we struggle to pay the rent and maintain our homes to a cost of housing that continues to grow. Agradecemos a los miembros de esta Junta que han apoyado los programas de asistencia y alquiler y prevención de desalojos.

[00:54:40] Yo soy beneficiaria de uno de esos programas. Sin embargo, muy pocos de nosotros hemos podido beneficiar este programa. Por esta razón exigimos a la Junta dedicar 10 millones a un programa de vivienda local para familias que ganan menos del 40% del promedio del income en todo el país.

[00:55:01] A lo largo, a largo plazo, esperamos que los fondos se dediquen para apoyar proyectos de vivienda accesibles, al menos a la mitad de unidades que sean accesibles para viviendas que ganan menos del 40% en el país. Esperamos que se comprometan con esto para poder hacer del Condado de Loudoun un lugar para la clase trabajadora decente para vivir.

[00:55:26] Gracias. Good afternoon, members of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. My name is Alejandro Hernandez. I am a member of the New Virginia Majority, an organization that helps to identify the needs of the working class community and unites us to fight for stability and justice in a country of immigrants.

[00:55:51] Housing is one of the biggest needs of the working class immigrant community today, as many of us struggle to pay the rent and keep up with the rising cost of living. we thank the members of this board who have supported rental assistance and eviction prevention programs i myself am a beneficiary

of the county's voucher program however for a few too few of us have been able to benefit from these programs it is for this reason that we are calling on the board to dedicate 10 million for a local rental voucher program for families

[00:56:29] earning less than 40 percent of the AMI. In the long run, we hope that the county will dedicate its housing funds to support affordable housing projects where at least half of the units are affordable for families that earn less than the 40 percent of AMI. We hope that you will commit to this so that we can make Loudoun County a better place to live for the working class. Thank you for the opportunity thank you next up is Adele Aleman followed by Jefferson Reyobas followed by Joris

[00:57:03] Serrano hola buenas tardes junta de supervisores soy Edick Aleman residente del area de Sterling y madre de familia como clase trabajadora que no tenemos salarios dignos cada año enfrentamos el aumento de la renta lo que limita nuestras posibilidades de cubrir necesidades básicas y brindarles a nuestros hijos oportunidades como programas deportivos u otras actividades que son

[00:57:40] muy costosos. Como padres hemos buscado soluciones para mejorar las escuelas del Condado de Loudoun y hemos notado que muchas familias no tienen acceso a programas extracurriculares. Estos programas son esenciales para que nuestros hijos crezcan en un ambiente de recreación y a la vez desarrollo in habilidades a potenciar su rendimiento escolar pedimos que nos apoyen y aprueben el presupuesto escolar que incluye los programas extra curriculares gratuitos después de las escuelas ya que creemos que son

[00:58:18] fundamentales para elevar las expectativas educativas y crear nuevas oportunidades para nuestros estudiantes gracias thank you hello good afternoon Board of Supervisors. I am Eric Element, the stolen area resident and mother. As a working class person who does not have a living wage, we face rising rents every year, which limits our ability to cover basic needs and provide our children with opportunities such as sports

[00:58:54] programs or other activities which are very expensive. As parents, we have sought out solutions to improve Loudoun County schools and we have noticed that many families do not have access to extracurricular programs. These programs are essential for our children to grow up in a recreational environment and at the same time develop skills that enhance their academic performance. We ask that you support and approve the school budget that includes free after school activities and we believe that are essential to raising

[00:59:32] educational expectations and creating new opportunities for our students. Thank you. Thank you very much. Next up is Jefferson Mirubas followed by Joris Serrano and we will go back and ask Carolina Leone to come up as the the third speaker in order. Good afternoon my name My name is Jefferson. I'm a student at Sterling Middle School. I'm a student with a lot of energy and desire to learn every day. I am currently suffering from bullying at school, which often makes me feel bad emotionally.

[01:00:05] I am here because I believe that it is important that students be supported with after school programs for free.

[01:00:20] I love sports and these programs will help me have a space where I can overcome challenges and face them in the best way I'm not the only one many students like me need this type of support especially those who do not have a clear focus to improve their education my mother cannot afford these

opportunities offered by the current programs because they are very expensive I have been advocating on the school board to be heard and I am glad to know

[01:00:58] that they supported us by including these programs in the school budget we ask that you support us in the approval of this budget and we will be allowed to have this opportunity that so many students thank you thank you very much mr rebus that was very good yoris serrano followed by catalina leone followed by yosu ayala

[01:01:29] buenas tardes punta de supervisores mi nombre es dory serrano soy representante de la comunidad de padres de lisburg como padre hoy nos enfrentamos altos costos de la vida especialmente de la renta It is one of the biggest challenges that we have faced due to low salaries.

[01:01:53] This situation limits us to be able to offer the support necessary for the future and educational development of our children. For months, as a community united, we have been advocated to the school committee to implement extracurricular programs after school.

[01:02:17] Nos complace que nuestra solicitud haya sido tomada en cuenta y que se haya incluido como parte del presupuesto del año escolar 2025. Hoy pedimos que como representantes del condado apoyen esta propuesta escolar que incluyan los programas fundamentales para el futuro de nuestros hijos, que es crucial para mejorar las oportunidades educativas y crear espacios de recreación como parte del desarrollo integral de nuestros

[01:02:55] niños permitiendo crecer en un entorno enfoque temprano de enfoque temprano y fortalezas de habilidades en los que los prepare para contribuir a nuestra sociedad como profesional en el futuro gracias thank you Catalina Leone followed Followed by, I believe it's Yosu Ayala, followed by Zoma Blanco.

[01:03:26] Good afternoon, Board of Supervisors. My name is Doris Serrano, and I represent our parent community in Leesburg. As parents today, we face high cost of living, especially rent, which is one of the greatest economic challenges we face due to low wages.

[01:03:43] This situation limits us in being able to offer the necessary support for the future and educational development of our children. For months, as a united community, we've been advocating before the school board to implement free extracurricular programs after school.

[01:04:02] We are pleased that our request has been taken into account and that has been included as part of the 2025 school budget. Today, we ask that as counting reps, you support the school budget that includes the fundamental programs for the future of our children.

[01:04:19] It is crucial to improve educational opportunities and create recreational spaces as part of the comprehensive development of our children, allowing them to grow in a focused environment early on that strengthens their skills and prepares them to continue in our society as professionals in the future.

[01:04:40] Thank you. Thank you. And now is Catalina Leone, followed by Lydia Morin, I'm sorry, followed by Yosu Ayala, followed by Zoma Blanco.

[01:04:56] Buenas noches, Presidente y Junta de Supervisores del Condado. Mi nombre es Catalina León, soy miembro de la Nueva Mayoría de Virginia. Vivo aquí en Lisboa por más de 20 años. Rendo un apartamento en Maynard Apartments.

[01:05:11] Soy madre de familia de tres niños y estoy pasando un gran desafío de vivienda porque pago una renta muy alta. Tomado a eso, un bill de internet obligatorio que nos impusieron en estos

apartamentos Y en este momento me he quedado sin trabajo porque dedico a cuidar a mis hijos pequeños que tienen un problema.

[01:05:38] Es obligatorio buscar ayuda y aplicar al programa de renta. Sin embargo, hasta esta fecha aún no he recibido respuesta de mi aplicación. Eso me tiene preocupada por un posible desalojo.

[01:05:53] What I say to you porque espero que todos ustedes to me and went on estrope die Petición y a prueba más puntos para que los programas de asistencia de la renta siga funcionando y todos los que estamos en lista de espera podamos recibir ayuda muchas gracias Thank you. Good evening President and Board of County Supervisors. My name is Carolina Leon. I am a member of the New Virginia majority. I have lived here in Leesburg for over 20 years. I rent an apartment at Manor

[01:06:32] Apartments. I'm a mother of three children, and I'm going through a great challenge with housing. I pay very high rent as well as mandatory internet bill that was imposed on us in this apartment. I'm at this moment out of work because I'm dedicating to taking care of my youngest son who suffers from a health problem.

[01:06:53] That forced me to seek help and apply for the rental program. However, to this date, I still have not received a response to my application. This has worried me about a possible eviction. That's why I'm here, because I hope that you all take into account our request and approve more funds so that the rental assistance programs continue to function and all of us who are on our waiting list can receive the help that we need.

[01:07:23] Thank you. Thank you. Next up is Josue Ayala, followed by Zoma Blanco, followed by Belkis Gutierrez. Good afternoon, board members. I'm sorry. My name is Josue Ayala.

[01:07:41] I am a biology student from NOVA University and, well, community college, actually. I'm here to ask you to strengthen our, what is it again? Strengthen our sports, our after school activities like sports, academics, and guidance for all the children in high schools.

[01:08:06] I actually recently graduated from Atlanta County last year, and I can tell you from experience that the school is not really that great. It's like they have a fear of computers or something, and I don't know what's up with it. Also, to point out the fact that my brother and sister are there, and my sister is actually in elementary school, in Frederick Douglass specifically, and my brother is going to the same high school as I am.

[01:08:30] and they are working with an IEP which kind of it's kind of hard like um is it's like they have a learning disability and so do I but I'm right out of the school and I'm here to ask you to help us improve the systems so that kids and hopefully like kids from the IEP program or any other programs that they're struggling through with learning disabilities to help them rebuild society since their future our future and i thank you for your time board members thank you mr realo

[01:09:06] we appreciate it next up is uh zoma blanco followed by belkis gutierrez followed by hilda larada hola buenas tardes punta de supervisores mi nombre es zulma blanco soy leader de la nueva mayoría de virginia vivo en lisburg primero quiero agradecerles por abrir los programas de asistencia para la renta y desalojos soy una de las beneficiadas gracias su

[01:09:39] apoyo lo logré evitar el desalojo sin embargo es aún seguimos enfrentando el mismo desafío ya que no te no tengo una un empleo estable la temporada de del invierno ha hecho que encontrar no

encuentre trabajo sea es muy difícil Estos programas deberían seguir ayudando a quienes no podemos cubrir el costo de la renta.

[01:10:11] Creemos que debería haber más presupuesto para viviendas como Valet de Alquiler, que beneficia directamente a nuestra familia y tendría un impacto positivo en nuestra situación económica.

[01:10:28] Por esta misma razón no podemos apoyar a nuestros hijos como nos gustaría. Es una educación ya que estamos limitados por los desafíos económicos relacionados con la renta.

[01:10:45] Esto nos impide ofrecerles espacios necesarios como programas deportivos o apoyo adicional en sus educaciones como padres de familia. Creemos que es necesario brindarles a nuestros hijos las oportunidades de acceder a programas gratuitos después de la escuela.

[01:11:10] Pedimos que aprueben más presupuestos para vivienda y educación que ayude a las familias de bajos ingresos como la nuestra, que estamos enfrentando grandes desafíos. les pedimos que piensen en las oportunidades que merecen como comunidad residente de este condado. Gracias. Gracias. Hi, my name is Zulma Blanco.

[01:11:40] Hello, good afternoon, Board of Supervisors. I am a leader of the New Virginia Majority and I live in Leesburg. Apologize. First, I want to thank you for the opening the rental and eviction assistance programs. I was one of the ones that benefited from that program, and thanks to your support, I managed to avoid eviction. However, we're still facing the same challenges, as I do not have a stable job.

[01:12:08] The winter season has made finding work very difficult. These programs should continue to help those of us who cannot cover the cost of rent. We believe that there should be more budget for housing, such as rental vouchers, which directly benefit our families and will have positive impact on our economic situation.

[01:12:31] For this same reason, we cannot support our children as we would like to in their education since we are limited by the economic challenges that are related to rent. This prevents us from offering them necessary spaces such as sports programs or additional support in their education.

[01:12:50] As parents, we believe that it's necessary to provide our children with the opportunity to access free after-school programs. We ask that you approve more budget for housing and education to help low-income families like ours who are facing great challenges.

[01:13:09] We ask that you think about the opportunities that we deserve as a community resident in this county. Thank you. Thank you. Next up, Belkis Gutierrez, followed by Hilda Lerada, followed by Eusebia Condezo. Buenas noches. Buenas noches, Juntas de Supervisores.

[01:13:39] Soy Hilda, madre y familia, y miembro de nuestra comunidad. Vivo en Sterling. Estoy aquí defendiendo las necesidades que deben mejorar en nuestras escuelas. Muchas familias no contamos con los recursos necesarios para ofrecer lo mejor a nuestros hijos, como deportes y apoyo adicional para mejorar sus habilidades y conocimientos.

[01:14:03] Trabajamos arduamente para cubrir lo básico, como el alquiler, lo que limita nuestra capacidad de costear recursos educativos adicionales. Creemos firmemente que los programas extracurriculares después de las escuelas ayudarán a muchos niños con problemas de conductas, depresión y bajo rendimiento.

[01:14:27] Al ofrecerles un espacio de aprendizaje y recreación que permita mejorar, es fundamental que el presupuesto escolar del LCPS sea aprobado para la implementación de programas gratuitos, comenzando en las escuelas primarias para que nuestros hijos crezcan con entusiasmos y disciplina y nuevas oportunidades.

[01:14:55] in deporte, arte, music, ayudas con tareas, lectura, escritura y matemáticas, y entre otros. Es crucial que estos programas sean accesibles para todos, sin importar la situación económica de las familias. Gracias.

[01:15:14] Thank you. Good afternoon Board of Supervisors, my name is Hilda, mother and a member of our community living in Sterling. I am here to advocate for the needs that need to be improved in our school.

[01:15:30] schools. Many families do not have the necessary resources to offer the best to our children, such as sports and additional support to improve their skills and knowledge. We work hard to cover the basics, such as rent, which limits our ability to afford additional educational resources. We firmly believe that after-school extracurricular programs will help many children with behavioral problems, depression, and low performance by offering them a space for learning and recreation that allows them to improve.

[01:16:07] It is essential that a Loudoun County school budget be approved for the implementation of the free after school programs, starting in elementary schools, so our children can grow with discipline and new opportunities in sports, arts, music, homework help, reading writing and math and math among others it is crucial that these programs be accessible to everyone regardless of the economic situation of the families thank you thank you uh eusebio

[01:16:41] condeso followed by iris patricia followed by olga is coy eusebia condeso okay uh next up is uh iris patricia buenas tardes junta de supervisores mi nombre es iris y vivo acá en lismur soy madre de familia como madre como padres estamos aquí abogando por cada uno de nuestros hijos que

[01:17:20] estudian en este condado somos una familia de clase trabajadora que aparta mucho pagando nuestros impuestos pero enfrentamos desafíos como los gastos costos de la renta que apenas nos alcanza para to cover the basic benefits that we can offer to our children.

[01:17:39] We believe that it is crucial to implement free programs after school as additional resources to strengthen the educational growth of our children. In sports, arts, among others. We know that the state offers these programs, but they are not accessible to our community.

[01:17:58] Pedimos que se apruebe el presupuesto escolar que incluye estos programas gratuitos después de la escuela para que todos los estudiantes puedan acceder a ellos sin que su situación económica sea un impedimento para alcanzar sus sueños. Debemos construir espacios donde se garantice la posibilidad de mejorar la calidad de vida y educación de nuestros hijos sin importar sus condiciones de vida, origen o estatus.

[01:18:24] La educación debe ser exclusiva y de un nivel más alto en nuestro condado. Gracias. Thank you. Hello, good afternoon, Board of Supervisors. My name is Iris. I live in Leesburg, and I'm a mother.

[01:18:41] As parents, we are advocating for each of our children who study in this county. We are a working-class family that contributes a lot by paying our taxes, but we face challenges such as high rent cost with barely covering the basics, limiting the educational benefits we can offer our children.

[01:19:02] We believe that it's crucial to implement free after-school programs as additional resources to strengthen the educational growth of our children in sports, arts, among others. We know that the county offers these programs, but they're not accessible to our community.

[01:19:20] We ask that the school budget be approved that includes these free after-school programs so that all students can access them without their economic situation being an impediment to achieving their dreams. We must build spaces where the possibility of improving the quality of life and education for our children is guaranteed, regardless of their living conditions, origin, or status.

[01:19:46] Education must be inclusive and of higher standard in our county. Thank you. Thank you. Next up is Olga Iskoy, followed by Marta Fabam, followed by Kelly Williams. Olga Iskoy?

[01:20:05] No. Okay. Next up then is Marta Fabam. Ms. Fabam. All right. Next up is Kelly Williams, followed by Samantha Clark, followed by Jessica Huff. Good evening.

[01:20:26] My name is Kelly Williams. I'm the mitigation specialist for the Public Defender's Office here in Loudoun County. And I lived here for, I grew up here and lived here for 25 years before moving to Frederick County. My mother still lives in Loudoun. I can't keep the job I love and am dedicated to unless I live outside of the county I grew up in.

[01:20:46] But for me and my colleague, Mr. Manson, who is our investigator you heard from earlier, it's not only about income for us. We are understaffed as it relates to non-attorney staff, my position in particular. I've been the sole mitigation specialist for the office for 16 years, actually, as of Tuesday this week, and I'm our longest-serving employee other than our chief, Ms. O'Donnell.

[01:21:09] As the sole mitigation specialist, I provide support to 12 attorneys. I identify and apply for substance abuse treatment and sober living housing for clients, assist with applying for Medicaid if needed so they can afford treatment, assist with coordinating court-ordered mental health evaluations and substance abuse evaluations.

[01:21:28] I'm the defense representative along with one of our attorneys on the veteran's docket in the general district court. I spend time in court advocating, providing support, coordinating witnesses, and testifying as needed. And the biggest part of my job is spending time building rapport with our clients charged with more serious crimes in order to gather their sensitive life histories, gather records of all kinds, speak to loved ones, and compile all of that information into what is hopefully a compelling narrative for the court to consider when deciding a sentence.

[01:21:59] As you can imagine, building this trust with clients takes a lot of time and patience. Mr. Manson mentioned earlier he and our other investigator as well as one of our paralegals often help me with some of these tasks such as tracking down records, applying for treatment because I simply don't have enough time.

[01:22:16] This takes away time that they could be spending on their core tasks as investigators and paralegals. I truly believe that some of our clients are missing out on the support I provide because our attorneys have to prioritize which of their cases to ask for my assistance on. So I'm just asking for your help in support of our requests, additional mitigation specialist positions to help me continue doing the job I love, help for our investigators and paralegals with the other positions we're seeking. The citizens of Loudoun County deserve every bit of support we are able to give them should they ever find themselves in the position where they need it. Thanks.

[01:22:50] Thank you Ms. Williams and again thanks to all the members of the Public Defender's Office for the great service to our county it would be nice if the state stepped up one of these years to the responsibility to support you better ms samantha clark followed by jessica huff followed by mr mr james russell good evening vice chair turner and members of the board i'm samantha clark the ceo of laws i want to acknowledge laws board members staff volunteers community partners and survivors who are in the room and online today over the past several days you've had you

[01:23:26] You have heard laws express our unwavering commitment to survivors and to the future of Loudoun County. You've heard about our history and our expertise in comprehensive survivor services. You've heard about our history and our expertise and services to thousands of survivors supported over the past four decades.

[01:23:45] And how laws has built and fortified a level of trust in the community, ensuring a seamless system of care without barriers or delays. We've shared the importance of ensuring that every survivor, no matter their background or circumstances, can seek safety without fear. How trusted community-based services like laws provide a vital lifeline to immigrant survivors and those hesitant to engage with government agencies, especially in the current national environment.

[01:24:11] You've heard our shared belief in the critical role of our existing CCR for offender accountability and survivor safety. You've heard DART's 21-year history of leadership in domestic violence response, the impact of its work on reducing DV homicides, and how local collaborations have shaped state laws and improved the justice system's response to violence.

[01:24:33] Our services each meet unique yet critical needs in an intricate fabric of response. The conversation on needs and prevalence is one we would all welcome the county leadership conversation in. We are your partner. We're the leader in this work in Loudoun County, and we've accumulated invaluable insights and expertise that can inform a well-coordinated, survivor-centered approach in the future.

[01:25:00] Today, we ask the board to take a measured, collaborative, fiscally responsible, and strategic approach in the creation of a domestic and sexual violence services unit proposed in DFS Priority 4, one that takes fully into account Laws' decade of experience, unique expertise, insights, and important and strong collaborations that do exist. We are ready to work with the county to inform and shape any new proposed resources to ensure they enhance, rather than replicate, trusted existing and well-established services and processes. Your support in this

[01:25:38] proposed approach is a reflection of your trust in our expertise, in our mission, and in the shared commitment we have to survivor safety and healing in Loudon. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Clark. Next up, Jessica Huff, followed by James Russell, followed by Donna Wadowski. Hi, good evening. My name is Jessica Huff. I'm a lifelong Loudon resident, both my husband and I. We feel very blessed that after college we were able to move back to this community, which is why we care so much about volunteering and coaching and supporting the youth and making sure they have outlets that are healthy and safe and productive.

[01:26:14] My husband is also the head football coach at Heritage High School, entering his seventh year After nine years at Briarwoods High School, I volunteer with Western Loudoun La Crosse, the Loudoun Knights Hockey Club, and the Killer Queens. Looking at the budget and CIP, it's obvious that the county has millions in data center revenue.

[01:26:31] I've heard a lot of talk about a potential arts event center costing millions, but I'd like to highlight a different project identified for future development and advancing in the CIP and budget. A facility housing two sheets of ice. As you may have heard via direct email from myself and others, the media and other board and council meetings, The owners of ION ITC intend to close the rinks, not due to lack of market demand, but gross mismanagement and greed, leaving nearly a thousand rostered hockey players, figure skaters, and thousands more who publicly skate recreationally, scrambling to find a home, including Loudoun's first and only Tier 2 girls teams and a 501c3 girls program, which

[01:27:08] provides affordable, developmental, and competitive opportunities for young women in our area. There is a facility in Ashburn, but it is at capacity, meaning ION skaters will displace others, but the majority will be forced to find programs outside of Loudoun in neighboring counties, and they will take their dollars to other restaurants, grocery stores, and gas stations outside of Loudoun too.

[01:27:28] Despite ION ownership being in the Loudoun Economic Development Commission and close acquaintances with local politicians, maybe even some of you, this elimination of a valuable community asset seems to have caught everyone by surprise. It's concerning to me that ice sports haven't been a budget consideration, so here's your chance.

[01:27:44] kindly request serious consideration for the addition of a rink in Loudoun to replace the two sheets we are losing. There are two projects currently in the CIP in the design phase, the Western Loudoun Recreation Center and the more nebulous indoor sports facility. Could these projects be modified to accommodate ice? Boland Park has also roughly 200 acres of undeveloped land that the county already owns. Could we not build a municipal rink there? The Mount Vernon Recreational Center is reopening this May and could be used as a possible exemplar. After 42 years, this rink was renovated and expanded by the Fairfax Park Authority, a community wellness hub.

[01:28:19] My final ask is besides support for the ICE in Loudoun is that no future public funds be allocated to the current ION ITC ownership in transition of their facility to anything else. They have proven themselves incapable of managing their current business and have lost community trust. We will be watching.

[01:28:35] Thank you. Thank you. Next up, Mr. James Russell, followed by Donna Wadowski, followed by Yvonne Santala. I don't think so. I don't think so. I found \$20 on the ground the other day.

[01:28:53] I relished in my good fortune, but I couldn't help but feel guilty. Somebody was expecting that \$20 to be there, but it wasn't. I came here tonight to advocate for housing vouchers. It's a no-brainer policy.

[01:29:10] When people's anxiety over rent is whatsoever alleviated, it can bring an immense improvement on people's lives, people's health. Such common-sense measures are essential in any socially robust community. However, in my attempts to familiarize myself with this issue, I've learned of a few inconsistencies.

[01:29:35] Under President Biden, the American Rescue Plan Act allocated millions of dollars to Loudoun County for rental assistance, and millions of dollars from that allotment remains unspent.

[01:29:51] This board was tasked to distribute these desperately needed funds and basically failed to do so. We should try to appreciate the immense suffering that resulted from this failure. Over 42% of Loudoun renters spend at least 30% of their income on rent, yet millions of dollars allocated are not applied.

[01:30:20] I implore this body to distribute this substantial sum of money. The many people you have heard speak here tonight, and the thousands of other hard-working Loudouners who can't make it to events such as this, have more than earned their place in our community.

[01:30:37] Instead, they struggle to make ends meet, while plainclothes federal agents continue to intimidate our immigrant neighbors. By any sober evaluation, such rental support should be an obvious move. However, we will have to manage our expectations.

[01:30:53] This economic precarity is not a bug, but a feature. It is a renewable resource, a penny saved and a penny earned. But we have an opportunity here. Proposals being discussed tonight are precisely how we can start to build a different, better Loudoun County.

[01:31:17] Thank you. Next up is Donna Wadowski, followed by Yvonne Santala, followed by Ryan Nauer. Donna Wadowski. All right, next up, Yvonne Santala.

[01:31:40] Good evening. Good evening. Loudoun County has been touted as one of the richest counties in the United States. With this recognition comes responsibility.

[01:31:56] We beseech you to take two steps with compassion for our poorest students, housing vouchers, and free after-school programs. In the United States, our economy burgeoned for 100 years from 1870 to 1970, but real wages in America stopped, according to the economist Richard Wolff.

[01:32:24] the average workers in 1978 made \$3.50 an hour. In 2023, after judging, adjusting for inflation, they made \$50 an hour.

[01:32:41] That may sound good, but they can buy no more goods than they could in 1978. and how many of our working families make \$50 an hour. Teachers don't. That's when women had to enter the workforce. That's when banks offered new plastic cards to let us accumulate debt.

[01:33:09] Loudoun County's working families are struggling. I learned that last year from a seven-year-old girl who told me her family was moving out of our apartment complex because they were struggling to pay the rent. I know it too, for I retired from a Fairfax public school. After they shook down their retirement package in 2001, I had just enough to retire here, where my grandchildren live.

[01:33:42] But the relentless yearling increase in rent in keeping with the market value, I am struggling too. Only you, Board of Supervisors, can make the difference for our working families through housing vouchers so other students will not have to move away from their friends and schools.

[01:34:06] To enable parents to work full-time, we need in Loudoun County free after-school care and learning opportunities for the children who would otherwise go home to an empty house.

[01:34:23] Instead, let them fill their time with meaningful social learning activities. Ma'am, your time is up. Less struggle, more compassion. Thank you very much. next up is Ryan Nauer followed by Isabel Alcon and then I believe we have a remote speaker Joel Cornell will be our final speaker good evening my name is Ryan Noor I've been a Loudoun County resident since I was two years old so long time since 1996 I would just like to talk a little bit about what I've noticed in the county over the past 30 years in terms of housing affordability

[01:35:03] both for like working-class people and people like myself who also I consider working-class. Over the past eight years or so, since 2017, I've noticed that the property values in Loudoun County have increased exponentially. As a result, you know, we've faced increasing property taxes, both car taxes and

housing taxes, and unfortunately the county doesn't offer any pedestrian-friendly areas where we can live without a car, so that's very, very burdensome to working-class families, as if they don't have vehicles, they can't go to work. So what I'm requesting is to have a bit of a tax relief on vehicles and on property

[01:35:38] properties for people who live in those properties and don't use them as a business expense and use kind of the data center revenue and business revenue that the county has being the richest county to provide this tax relief for working class families. Thank you very much.

[01:35:53] Thank you. Next up is Isabel, I believe it's Alcon, followed by our remote speaker, Joel Cornell. Good evening. Good evening.

[01:36:09] My name is Isabel Alcon. a mother and leader of New Virginia majority, I lived here in Lisbon for 30 years. As a community of parents, we are advocating for a better future for our children.

[01:36:26] We believe that everyone deserves access to recreational spaces and quality education that's allowed them to develop their skills, wherever the cost is current, very high.

[01:36:42] Education that's allowed them to develop their skills, extracurricular programs are a barrier for many families in Loudoun County. For this reason, we have a work in the school board implement free after-school program as additional support.

[01:37:02] These programs include the school budget, its approval will be benefit for low-income families. We ask for your support that you can vote and favor the school budget and also affordable housing. We are in families in Loudoun County, working, very hardworking families, struggling with it every month.

[01:37:25] I can say I spend 75% of my budget monthly to pay the rent. Every night for me is sleeping, counting every penny I have. Sometimes I have to choose pay the rent or do the shopping food for my kids.

[01:37:47] Thank you so much. Thank you, Ms. Elkhorn. Andy, do we have Joel Cornell online? We do. Mr. Cornell, you're up to speak. Thank you very much to the Board of Supervisors for this opportunity to speak, especially Supervisor Sains, who does a great job representing the needs of his constituents.

[01:38:12] My name is Joel Cornell. I work locally as a barista, as a preschool parent aide, as well as the Friends of Sterling Library treasurer. I'm here to advocate for affordable housing, increased childcare and after-school programs, and for increased library budgets to place social workers in our libraries, where our beloved librarians are daily on the front lines of the many crises that our neighbors face.

[01:38:36] The unhoused population nationally has increased by nearly 15 percent, but it has increased by a staggering 30 percent here in Loudoun County. We are privileged to live in one of the most affluent counties in the nation, which makes Loudoun one of the most affluent places in the world. Every government budget is a moral doctrine.

[01:38:54] It explicitly lays out that government's priorities, and it is a deeply shameful moral failing that any person living here goes without food, shelter, and medicine when there is so much wealth all around us. Nearly half of Loudoun's renters are housing insecure, spending over 30% of their income on rent. Our most essential workers can't afford to live where they work, which takes a toll on our time, our roads, and our struggling natural environment.

[01:39:19] Most of our working-class families can't afford both rent and child care. We're faced with the agonizing decision between whether we can afford to do the job we're meant to do as parents, raising our

kids as stay-at-home parents, or whether we can afford the high cost of child care so that we can go to work so that we can afford child care.

[01:39:37] All this money we spend on housing and child care flows back into the hands of the affluent ruling class when it should be flowing back to the working class who actually power our economy every single day. When a few social safety nets we have fall through, these crises often manifest and the only free third spaces we have left in this country are libraries and our community centers. Sterling Library has had to hire armed guards to make sure that our librarians feel safe from the regular crises that threaten their safety. And still one of the most affluent counties in the world can't come in the budgetary capacity, to place social workers in much-needed spaces.

[01:40:17] Librarians and community center workers are the front lines of our community, and they need to be properly equipped so that they can do their jobs. We need our budget to include vastly expanded housing vouchers, free child care for all, and social workers for our libraries and community centers.

[01:40:34] Thank you again for your time. Thank you very much. Is there anyone else online, Andy, that wants to speak? We don't have anybody else. Okay. Anyone else in the room who would like to speak? Seeing none, I call this budget public hearing adjourned. Thank you very much.



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