




MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

TO: Councilmembers

FROM: Nancy Navarro, Council President 
Chair, Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee

DATE: October 30, 2013

SUBJECT: Health Insurance Requirement for County Contractors

The recent strike by workers at two of the County's trash collection contractors has raised serious issues about the application and effectiveness of our Living Wage Law. On February 3, 2014, the Department of General Services (DGS) is scheduled to brief the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee (GO) on how they monitor compliance with the Living Wage Law. However, workers earning \$13.95 an hour for 8 hours a day/5 days a week (or \$29,016 a year) struggle to make ends meet in Montgomery County.

One of the most essential needs of all residents is quality, affordable health insurance. Our legislative attorney is completing a draft of a bill, which you will receive by Monday. This bill would amend the County's Living Wage law to require County contractors to provide affordable health insurance to employees who work more than 30 hours a week on County contracts and earn less than twice the Living Wage. We are also exploring legislation that would grant a preference to a bidder on a County contract who provides affordable benefits for their employees. Both bills would apply to new contracts and renewals of existing contracts.

In Montgomery County, we have a proud history of standing up for the rights of working men and women. We treat our County employees fairly and the same should be true of those who are employed by our County contractors. That is why the first bill I introduced after joining the Council required County contractors to provide benefits to employees with same-sex partners. In that same vein, we need to make sure anyone employed by a County contractor has access to quality, affordable health insurance. I am looking forward to a full discussion and input from the business and labor communities to achieve a result that is affordable for both employers and employees. Thank you in advance for your support and for considering signing on as a co-sponsor.