

**Director Parker Hamilton**  
**Opening Remarks**  
**HHS Work Session**  
**April 14, 2011**  
**MCPL on FY12 Budget**

Good Afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Montgomery County Public Libraries' Budget. I think it's important for all who review the MCPL Budget and our services to realize that FY12 marks the fourth straight year of reductions to the libraries budget. MCPL has made its service plans in this multi-year context, addressing over 11.5 million in cuts since FY08. In the early years of those reductions, we were able to minimize the impact of those resource reductions on our customers, but as we move into the fourth year of cuts, our customers have felt a substantial reduction in library services, and the FY12 cuts will deepen that impact.

The \$11.5 million reduction of resources for library services from FY2008 – FY2011 is a 29% decline, which includes 146 positions abolished, halving of the materials budget, and a 13% services hours reduction. The FY12 budget would bring that total decline from FY08 to 35%, cutting 178 positions total. I think that your staff packet, and the testimony and letters you have received, speak volumes to how these reductions have negatively impacted our customers and staff.

Libraries are active ever changing places where residents meet and gather. It is also the place where users have access to free accurate information to effectively start their businesses, complete school work, learn new skills for their professional development, find a job, learn how to read, make important life decisions, use the computers, connect to the internet, use our WiFi network, find a good book to read, connect to online databases and, best of all: a highly trained and qualified staff to assist them in having a positive library experience. MCPL is the core information and lifelong learning institution in Montgomery County. We are a vital part of Montgomery County's economic development, education and community engagement quilt. We change lives, and yes, we have been told that we "save lives".

In order to fulfill our mission, we need qualified staff and enough library materials to satisfy the needs of our large and diverse community.

As you reflect on Mr. Leggett's recommendations, I ask you to look not only on the FY12 recommendations but the past cuts and building to the future. We need to be strategic in our approach and we need sustainable decisions.

I thank you for the time you have spent with library advocates and look forward to our discussion. I also acknowledge the tough decisions ahead of you and thank you for your leadership on behalf of library staff and users.