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## MAYOR EDWARD ESTES

July 31, 2018

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The Honorable Deborah Eason  
President, Council of the City of Glenarden  
8600 Glenarden Parkway  
Glenarden, Maryland 20706

Dear President Eason,

Today I am vetoing O-01-2019, Emergency Ordinance to Amend the City of Glenarden's Budget for Fiscal Year 2019. Over the past several weeks, I have listened closely to the administrative staff and the City Council members discuss and debate the Mayor's proposed revisions to the City Budget. However, there has been one voice that has not been heard. And that voice is of the residents of the City of Glenarden. I strongly believe that the Council has intentionally omitted the residents of the City of Glenarden's input and their needs that they deem necessary in the budget process. In addition, several proposals recommended to improve the engagement and public services to and for the residents of Glenarden were omitted from the budget. I have concluded that the Ordinance, while well intended, is flawed and will fail to achieve its intended goal.

Over the last year, my administration has worked tirelessly to re-establish original charter departments and committees, help residents to obtain innovative and transparent communications, create jobs, help our residents obtain employment, and escape poverty; redevelop vacant housing and properties; and provide improved human services for our seniors, children in need of care and homeless people that cannot find proper services and shelter. It is because of these very commitments, in fact, that I feel compelled to veto the Ordinance- because it will not improve employment opportunities for the vast majority of our longtime residential workforce and will not improve the quality of our residential communities. To the contrary, it would result in significant harm to the residents and areas in the City most in need of jobs, economic development and new amenities by not re-establishing the Economic Development and Housing Department, the Youth and Human Services Department and the Communications Department.

In listening to the well-intentioned voices of the Council expressing support for not re-establishing the departments, i have heard a number of fundamental misunderstandings and biases about what the proposed budget would actually do and what its enactment into law would mean for Glenarden residents. Specifically:

1. **The Communication Department cannot include today's media technology**, because the Glenarden Communications Department is
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established to assume the responsibility for performing the duties and responsibilities related to cable television coverage. It is not determined in the charter that the inclusion of future advancement of communications technology should not be acceptable in determining the performance and staffing of the Communications Department in the proposed budget.

2. **The Cable Television budget operates as an independent service solely for the purpose of recording Council Meetings,** because the Glenarden Communications Department is established to assume the responsibility for performing the duties and responsibilities related to cable television coverage only. The charter is intended to have a Communications Department that is also for the City of Glenarden and to publicize events of special interest to the Mayor, City Council, and residents of Glenarden. In addition, the charter indicates that a Director, (not a contract consulting firm) appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council, shall provide direct supervision of the cable operations, and direct supervision of the Glenarden Communications Department is the responsibility of the City Manager and not the Council.
  3. **The Communication Department's Guidance Committee is irrelevant,** because the Council only requires that the City have communications staff and volunteer residents for recording of Council Meetings only. However, the charter states that the Communications Department (which includes cable television) shall have a Guidance Committee that shall consist of four members to be appointed by the respective Ward Council persons and one by the Mayor. The Committee duties include developing programming objectives and a monthly schedule of program events with a brief description for approval by the Mayor and Council; perform program monitoring to determine if there is adherence to the program objectives; submit periodic reports on the cable operations as the Mayor and/or City Council may require; and provide assurance that there is adherence to all related cable television regulations.
  4. **The proposed Economic Development and Housing Department is not necessary,** because, well we don't have any written evidence, data or knowledge as to why people should need help with employment and housing needs in our communities. It is also the opinion of this City Council that the residents would not support redevelopment in our City's under developed and unsafe pedestrian and dangerous vehicular highway corridor. The Council's revised budget will not modestly delay economic development in underserved City neighborhoods long deprived of jobs and retail amenities, it will kill economic development in these communities for another generation. It will have a chilling effect on economic development everywhere n our city by sending a clear message to retailers considering looking beyond the Woodmore Towne
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Centre, that they are not welcomed here. More immediately, it would mean that long-stalled County planning objectives for the 704 Corridor in Glenarden- a planning proposal already delayed for more than 20 years- would continue to be on hold indefinitely.

5. **The proposed Mayors Office of Youth and Human Services is simply a committee not a Department with staff**, because all we need is after school activities and organized sporting events to better serve our youth by volunteer residents. The omission of the The Mayor's Office of Youth and Human Services from the budget is ultimately a poor excuse to say it is not our problem but the Counties problem. It would be unfair to residents to say we would be a full service Office, but often times, it will make a difference to help all of our seniors, youth and families to feel confident that the City Government can lend a hand in assisting them through the process with the County.

The Mayors Office of Youth and Human Services can conducts policy research, analysis, evaluation, and coordination on various issues across the Department in concert with the County, including but not limited to, poverty and measurement, vulnerable populations, early childhood education and child welfare, family strengthening, economic support for families, and youth development. MYHS serves as a liaison with other County agencies on broad economic matters and is the Department's lead on poverty research and analysis.

Within the MYHS the Division of Children and Youth Policy would focus on policies related to the well-being of children and youth. Key areas include early childhood, early care and education, home visiting, youth development and risky behaviors, parenting and family support, child welfare and foster care, linkages with physical and mental health, methods for evaluating what works, and strategies for improving research and data in these areas.

The Division of Economic Support for Families would focus on policies affecting various low-income populations. This includes policy development around major initiatives such as homelessness and reentry. It also includes conducting and coordinating analysis, research, and evaluation on the safety net, economic support and opportunity, welfare-to-work issues, strengthening families and responsible fatherhood, child support enforcement, and domestic violence. Other key priorities include place-based initiatives, immigration and refugees, human trafficking, benefits access, and various human services programs. All of which will work alongside existing non-profit and County provided services made available to our residents. The City would establish a sense of support and trust to our residents through these efforts.

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Some have suggested that my decision to veto this Budget Ordinance is personal and will be totally ignored by the residents and the City Council. Nothing could be further from the truth. Anyone who knows me and has followed my attempts to make a difference in the City against all odds, know that I do not back down from bullies, I stand up for what is right. In vetoing this Ordinance, I stand up for the residents left out in the dark from lack of the City's communications and transparency; I stand up for unemployed City residents who need a job and an employment history; I stand up for the families that feel left out and need a guiding hand of hope.

We must put the debating behind us and we must remain firmly focused on my Administrations top priority of growing and diversifying the City's economy in order to create new good-paying jobs and to better educate and prepare our residents to obtain them. If I were to sign this Ordinance into law, it would do nothing but hinder our ability to create jobs and drive away retailers from the 704 corridor; keep our residents uninformed and lacking knowledge of our improving services, and discourage families from making Glenarden their home.

Sincerely yours,

Edward Estes

Mayor

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