



The Empty Fridge Syndrome

Some bare statistics:

For the fiscal year that began July 1st Montgomery County's Democrat Executive, Mark Elrich, sent the all-Democrat County Council a budget of \$6.8 billion. That's a lot of money. In fact, it's more money than they've got.

So, where's the money to come from? The standard Democrat answer has been "raise taxes." But they did that just three years ago and still ended up \$120 million in the red. You might think that would teach them a lesson. If so, you'd be wrong. Elrich wants to raise property taxes again. And gasoline taxes.

But not to worry, we are told, economic growth will avoid more future tax hikes.

It might if there were any growth. But there isn't. In a recent five-year period, Montgomery County gained a net of *six* new business establishments such as a store, a restaurant, or an office. By comparison, in the same period Fairfax County, Virginia, just across the river, added more than 3000 new businesses.

No doubt the Democrats will be tempted to reach for the county's credit card. But if you've ever tried that at home you know how well that works. As of the end of the last fiscal year, the county operating debt totaled more than \$4 billion. The cost of servicing it, now some \$435 million a year, is projected to grow by \$4 million.

So, what to do?

How about cutting spending?

What a terribly Republican idea.



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