

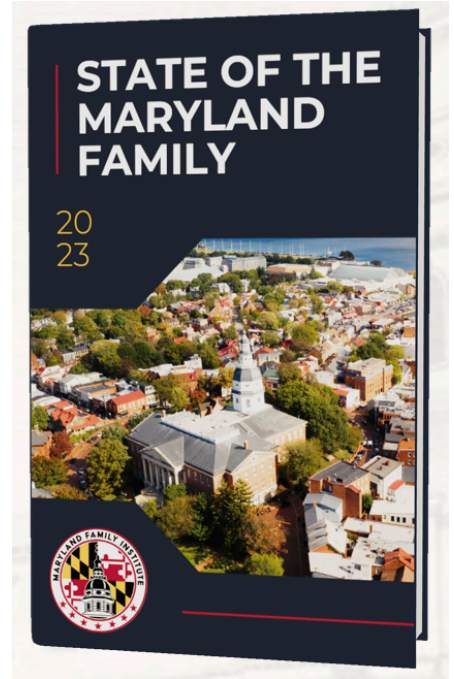
Robert Nelson's Testimony to the Montgomery County Council at the Public Hearing on the FY25 Operating Budget, April 8, 2024

I'm Robert Nelson, homeowner in Goshen and past chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board.

The Maryland Family Institute recently produced a Report titled "The State of the Maryland Family" available for free download at MarylandFamily.org. In the 58-page report it's clear that "nearly every challenge we face today -- from crime, to poverty, to educational decline -- bears a meaningful and enduring relationship with family formation."

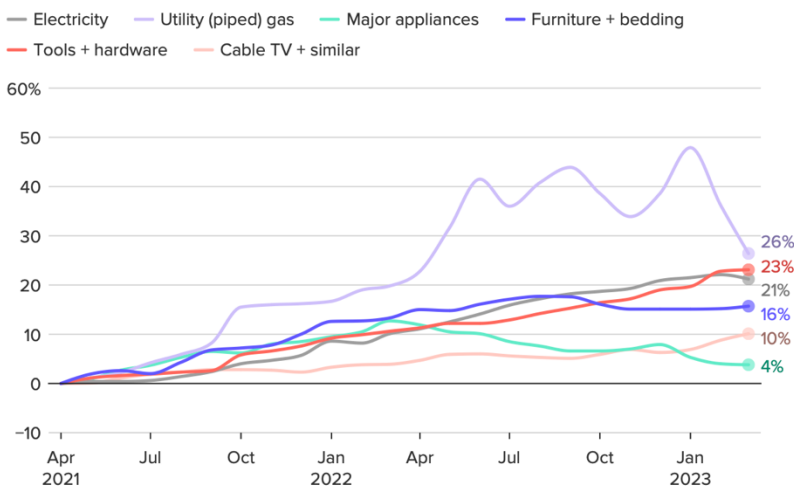
But families and seniors are really suffering from the impact of inflation over the past three years. Household costs are up over 20%. Airline fares and hotels are up over 30%. In January my home assessment increased 39%. I had no car accidents, but this month my insurance premium increased 23% on my 20 year old car.

Montgomery County's proposed operating budget is over \$7B! The average budget of five other states (WY, SD, NH, MT and ND) is just over \$7B. The State of Maryland and other counties are holding the line and not making tax increases, but



Household costs

Percent change in the consumer price index since April 2021



Note: **Cable TV + similar** includes satellite and streaming services.

Chart: Gabriel Cortes / CNBC

Source: CNBC analysis of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' seasonally adjusted [consumer price index](#)

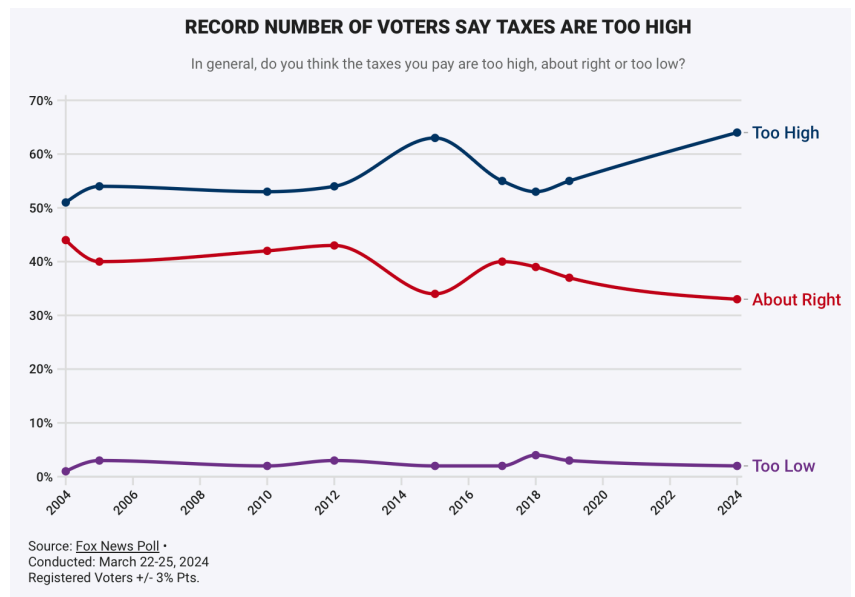
Data last updated April 12, 2023



unfortunately Montgomery County is not one of them. It's probably reasonable to support new initiatives like the "\$7M Innovation Fund that will award up to \$100,000 to eligible companies developing innovative technology, design or processes." But is Montgomery County doing the same to utilize innovative processes and improve efficiencies in the county administration?

Most parking garages including the new one in Annapolis have eliminated attendants, but here at the Montgomery County Council building there is no self-service automated process to pay for parking. From my limited vantage point, I'd say there is a lot of fat to cut and I'll give you another example. I just transferred my home title into a trust so that it will be easier for my heirs to inherit. I filled out a paper intake form, notarized the document and took it to the Transfer-Recordation Tax Office. There were several people behind the counter, but they gave me a used envelope and told me to insert everything into a nearby drop box. Then they called me the next day, to pick this up and take it across the street. So I came down to Rockville for the second time, picked up the paperwork, walked across the street to the Courthouse Land Records Department and there were several people behind a counter. This time they collected a \$60 fee from me. So why are there so many people needed to do these clerical functions? And why is the taxpayer inconvenienced with bureaucratic inefficiencies and two trips to Rockville?

Families and seniors have had to cut their budgets to make ends meet or pay for larger purchases with credit cards bearing high interest rates. It's time that Montgomery County embrace innovation, make processes more efficient and downsize the bloated bureaucracy. **Just say "no" to a tax increase!**



Reference Links:

<https://marylandfamily.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/MFI-State-of-the-Family-2023-Report.pdf>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2023/04/14/charts-how-much-inflation-increased-since-2021.html>

<https://www.foxnews.com/official-polls/fox-news-poll-record-number-taxes-too-high>