

Vote No:  
Keep the Council-Administrator Form of Government

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My reason for recommending we maintain our current form of government boil down to four: Power, Money, Representation and Openness.

I am in favor of retaining our present, Council-Administrator form of county government. There are several types of government allowed by Maryland law, with examples of both good and not so good results. The success depends largely on the individuals elected to office rather than the type of government.

In Wicomico we have Charter home rule with seven elected citizens who guide our county similar to a corporate board of directors. The citizen council meets, sets priorities, strikes a budget and serves the needs of a growing, vibrant county.

Our citizen-based council consists of seven part-time people from various areas of the county and various walks of life. Their efforts sometimes seem slow; but thank goodness they are deliberate. They must have a majority consensus; they must deliberate and act in public meetings. Consensus building protects us from individual agendas. Public meetings provide the safety and transparency democracy is built on. This system works!

To implement their constituents' goals the council members hire a CEO or administrative director to carry out their plan. This well-trained, experienced professional serves at the pleasure of the council as long as he is responsive to those he serves. Studies show that this type of government in Maryland spends far less on administrative costs than counties with Executive form of government.

To change our form of government will increase the cost to taxpayers. A recent study estimates the start-up cost at \$437,000. Do we want to spend more money on government or is it better to spend our limited resources on services, capitol projects, roads, and education or public safety? How can we justify spending any more money when there is **no** evidence that a change will bring better government to Wicomico County?

Let me remind you that we sacrifice four very valuable commodities if we adopt these charter amendments: Power, Money, Representation and Openness.

In our current form of citizen council government we give power to 7 fellow citizens. Two represent Wicomico County at large, the other five represent their home communities. A vote for county executive form of government will give all power to one individual: a professional politician.

Creating this new position, with the necessary administrative and legal support, will add to the cost of government in our county. The county's ability to deliver necessary services, such as public safety, education and health care, is already challenged by a tax revenue cap. Adding to the cost of government itself simply doesn't make sense.

When we give power over decision-making to a single executive, we ask that executive to consider the needs of every citizen of the County. When we expanded the council, back in the 1980s, it was because we recognized the need for community-based representation. Today, rural and urban areas of the county enjoy equal representation because of that decision. To install a County Executive would be to take a step backward, away from fair representation.

Last, but certainly not least, our current council conducts the executive business of the County in public meetings – its sessions are even broadcast on PAC/14. Why would we sacrifice that openness? We have the best of the democratic process with the current system. This is no time to lose what we have gained.

Vote NO to a new form of government in Wicomico.