



# Fairfax Families Against the Food Tax

For Immediate Release

Contact: Christy Moran, 703-299-2602  
[cmoran@webermerritt.com](mailto:cmoran@webermerritt.com)

## **FAIRFAX FAMILIES AGAINST THE FOOD TAX COALITION APPLAUDS VOTERS REJECTION OF MEALS TAX**

Fairfax, VA – November 9, 2016 – On Election Day, Fairfax County voters sent a strong signal to county leaders to manage their tax dollars better and rejected outright the Board of Supervisors’ proposed meals tax. This was the second time a meals tax was on the ballot (1992) and was voted down, again. The Fairfax Families Against the Food Tax (FFAFT), a group of area restaurants, Chambers of Commerce and families, publicly opposed the 4% tax on all prepared and ready-to-eat food purchased in the county because the tax was regressive, unfairly targeted a single industry and was sold to voters in a deceptive way.

The Board of Supervisors misled voters with a plea that Fairfax County Public Schools needed the money despite county spending on Fairfax County Public Schools consistently increased over the last five years. In 2016, a total of \$2.01 billion went to schools, making up 52.7% of all disbursements.

“The official ballot language did not mention nor guarantee that teacher salaries would increase or classroom sizes be reduced with the generated funds,” said **Mark Heider, a parent with two children in Fairfax County public schools**. Proponents claimed that 70% of generated revenue would go towards Fairfax County public schools but not over and above the existing education budget. “The dishonest way that County Supervisors sold this tax was troubling to voters and I hope the “no” vote was a strong message back to them,” said Heider.

**Jim Corcoran, President & CEO of the Northern Virginia Chamber**, in a statement said “The voters of Fairfax County sent a clear message to their leaders that anti-business proposals, like the single-industry meals tax, are not the right way to raise government revenue. The only long-term answer to boosting revenues in Fairfax County and Northern Virginia is through growing the commercial tax base. As The



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Voice of Business in Northern Virginia™, we look forward to working with local and state government on pro-growth policies that drive private sector investment, resulting in the growth of existing businesses, new businesses, and new industries that will support a vibrant Northern Virginia.”

**Eric Terry, President of the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association**, said “We are pleased that Fairfax County residents took the time to understand the issue before them regarding this regressive tax. The tax not only heavily targeted residents but also unfairly targeted young and low-income families. It also placed a heavy burden on a single industry to fund a tax increase for which the County struggled to communicate their spending plan. We are happy residents rightly voted ‘no’ on this significant tax increase.”

“County leaders need to understand that the solution to any perceived problems shouldn’t be to demand more money from county residents and visitors,” said **Claude Andersen of Clyde’s Restaurant Group**. Fairfax County residents had their property taxes increased by \$100 million earlier this year. “Yesterday, voters said ‘enough is enough.’”

**Fairfax Families Against the Food Tax** is a coalition of local restaurants, businesses, and organizations that oppose the 4 percent meals tax on all prepared food, which will be voted on by Fairfax County residents on November 8th. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proposes an additional 4 percent tax on prepared meals at Fairfax establishments including fast-casual and fine-dining restaurants, ready-to-eat meals at grocery stores and convenience stores, hot dog stands and food trucks, hotel banquets, and movie theaters, among other places.

Members of the coalition include Americans for Prosperity, American Tap Room, Applebee’s Grill and Bar, Austin Grill and Tequila Bar, Be Right Burger, Best Buns Company, Boxwood Estate Winery, Chuy’s, Clyde’s of Mark Center, Clyde’s of Reston, Clyde’s of Tysons Corner, Coastal Flats, Crest Advanced Dry Cleaners, DMV Food Truck Association, Fairbrook Hotels, Glory Days Grill, Gordon Biersch Brewing Company, Mt. Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Hyatt Regency Reston, Hyatt Regency Tyson’s Corner, Jackson’s, Jose Andres Think Food Group, JR’s, Korean American Chamber of Commerce, Mike’s American, Ozzie’s Good Eats, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Potomac Pastries, PM Hotel Group, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, Silver Diner, Silver Spoon Catering, Silverado, Sweetwater Tavern, Tavern 64, The Old Brogue, Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Restaurant Lodging Travel Association, Young Conservative Coalition, and over 2,000 individuals, and growing, who have signed up to help stop the food tax.

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