

Biography

Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan

Douglas M. Duncan is currently serving his third term as County Executive of Montgomery County, Maryland's largest jurisdiction. Since his election in 1994, Duncan has provided hands-on leadership to improve educational excellence, address the County's severe traffic congestion problems and position Montgomery as an international biotechnology leader. The Washington Post -- which has called Duncan the "Mayor of Montgomery" -- describes his governing style as "county leadership that knows when to quit mulling and start moving."

Displaying strong fiscal management, Duncan has reduced the average household property tax burden by eight percent, while increasing funding for public schools, transportation, public safety, libraries, and other essential services. Understanding the importance of leveraging resources, the Executive -- affectionately referred to by members of the Maryland legislature as 'Delegate Duncan' -- aggressively lobbied to increase state aid 122 percent since 1995.

Duncan is working tirelessly to solve the single greatest threat to Montgomery County's quality of life -- traffic congestion. He budgeted more than \$1 billion for roads, rail, and new bus lines, and worked to change the "not in my backyard" attitude about new, desperately needed transportation projects. His personal involvement in pedestrian safety has sparked new regional efforts to reduce deaths and injuries.

A top priority remains quality education, and Duncan upped per-student spending every year of his administration, increasing investment by 60 percent for all-day kindergarten programs, decreased class sizes, more teachers, and increased professional development.

Under Duncan's ambitious anti-poverty program "Rewarding Work," Montgomery became the first County in the nation to implement a local Earned Income Tax Credit, targeting tax relief to working poor families. He improved access to health care for the needy, expanded transit subsidies, provided job training, and doubled annual spending on affordable housing to \$15 million.

Duncan strengthened the economy by spearheading business recruitment and redevelopment, establishing Montgomery as the state's job growth leader with the lowest unemployment rate. He solidified the County as a world biotechnology leader, which led Time Magazine to dub Montgomery "DNA Alley."

As part of an aggressive smart-growth program, Duncan has made revitalization of declining central business districts a priority, starting with downtown Silver Spring. Through a \$560 million public-private partnership Silver Spring is being transformed with a 20-acre mixed use project, including restoration of the historic Silver Theatre, for the American Film Institute, and construction of Discovery Communications' world

headquarters.

Under his leadership, Montgomery became one of the first jurisdictions to require local gun dealers to provide child safety locks for handguns sold or traded. Duncan has helped protect the safety of citizens by hiring more police and reducing violent crime 21 percent from 1995 to 2001.

Duncan has dramatically increased funding for recreation and cultural activities, including a new concert hall and arts education center, and funding for cultural arts activities. His leadership in protecting the environment has led to significant improvements. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Montgomery "leads the nation in saving farmland from development."

Duncan, with his unique sense of urgency, led Montgomery through its transformation from a suburban bedroom community into an international urban center recognized for visionary land planning, a premier high technology industry and vast green space and parks. Getting the job done in local government is never easy, but getting the job done is Duncan's passion.

Talking Points
Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan
Democratic Task Force on Homeland Security Hearing
June 24, 2003

- **Thank Caucus Chairman Robert Menendez and Task Force Chair Carolyn Maloney for the invitation to speak on this critical issue.**
- **Appreciate the support of the other members of Congress, and the International Association of Firefighters who are working to ensure that first responders are getting the funding they need to protect our homeland.**

- **It is our first responders - Montgomery County police officers, firefighters, public health officials and others who will respond in the event of a terrorist attack, just as they did following the attack on the Pentagon and the Anthrax scare that paralyzed our region.**
- **Let me make very clear that Montgomery County is able to respond to disasters and emergency situations. Our public safety and health professionals have been preparing and training for potential biological, chemical and nuclear attacks, as well as more conventional emergency and natural disaster incidents for many years.**

- **We are working closely with regional homeland security director Michael Byrne, as well as with all of the federal, state and local officials on our security preparations. We have cooperated with the homeland security director and our regional partners in performing a risk assessment and inventory of capability for our County and this region. It is anticipated that this cooperation will continue through funding our needs to enhance our response capabilities.**

- **But let me also be clear that in order to ready our first responders and do their part to protect the homeland, we are having to either divert resources from other services, or identify new local resources to make up the difference.**
- **To date, Montgomery County has spent approximately \$175 million on homeland security, and we have received reimbursement for only \$17 million - or approximately 10 percent of that amount.**

- **That means that in order to help fight the war on terrorism here at home, we have had to make hard choices in education, transportation and health services so that we can commit the resources necessary to provide for our homeland defense.**
- **We're meeting the security challenge at the local level because we're using local resources to do it. When you look at the long-term costs of what it may take to sustain this effort - especially if the security threat is elevated even higher - it is clear that we need more federal help.**

We need to be able to focus our limited resources on

**housing, health care and other services essential to
the people in our communities.**

- **Thank you.**