



County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

Testimony of

**Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive,
Fairfax County, Virginia**

**Before the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy,
Intergovernmental Relations and Procurement Reform**

James Lankford, Chairman

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

**Room 2203
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
9:30 a.m.**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive, Fairfax County, Virginia, a position that I have had the privilege of holding since January, 2000.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today on the subject of unfunded mandates. It is a subject that is treated with some sensitivity in how Fairfax County legislates and operates. When County staff proposes changes to local ordinances or in how it operates there is a requirement to identify the regulatory and financial impact of such changes as part of the staff report to the Board of Supervisors. In addition, County staff works in advance with the impacted parties to understand the effects of any changes and to reach a consensus, if possible, on implementation and cost. The County staff frequently is trying to balance the interests of public safety and quality of life with the immediate concerns of neighborhoods and industry. The process concludes with a public hearing. If staff has done its job well, there are few or no speakers and the decision of the Board of Supervisors is usually unanimous.

Since local government is the “closest to the people” it is ironic that the use of a significant amount of its resources are, in fact, dictated by the higher levels of government. In FY 2008, the last time Fairfax County analyzed the cost of mandates, it was estimated that the net cost of Federal and State mandates was \$751 million out of a \$3 billion general fund. Federal mandates accounted for 39 percent of all mandated expenditures for a net cost to the County of \$313 million.

What is more difficult to do with the cost of mandates is to decipher how much a community would pay to implement a mandate whether it was a mandate or not. In many instances Fairfax County chooses to exceed State mandates because the mandate is viewed as a minimum as it relates to quality of life. Schools and mental health are examples.

Some Federal mandates are not as apparent as say the American Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). For example, Fairfax County is trying to mitigate the impacts of decisions made in the last round of the Base Closure and Realignment Act (BRAC) which in most instances relocated Defense employees located near transit to Fort Belvoir which has no transit and is served by a road system already at capacity. While the County appreciates the additional 26,000 jobs at Fort Belvoir, it actually tried to limit the BRAC related moves in the National Capital Region because of the negative impact to the transportation system. The Defense Department provides no money for road improvements external to the military installations unless the impact exceeds the doubling of traffic. Given that the primary roads involved are I-95 and Route 1, no money is forthcoming. The estimate to mitigate the moves to Fort Belvoir are in excess of \$800 million, money which neither the State nor the County have.

Unlike the County’s process, the Federal government did not quantify the impacts of the relocation on the host jurisdiction or the region, nor has the Federal government in the form of the Defense Department offered to mitigate the impacts. In fact, access to the Proving Ground of

Fort Belvoir would not have been possible without a significant financial contribution by the County and the State.

In closing, I would note that regulation by all levels of government are necessary to achieve certain minimums in how services and facilities are available to our public, but communication, sensitivity, balance, and identified resources need to be part of the process creating them.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the privilege to speak. I will be pleased to respond to the committee's questions.

ANTHONY H. GRIFFIN
County Executive, Fairfax County, VA

As County Executive, Tony oversees the operations of all of Fairfax County government.

On November 22, 1999, Tony was appointed County Executive, effective January 15, 2000. He joined the County in 1989 when he was appointed to the position of Deputy County Executive for Planning and Development and oversaw the areas concerning zoning, public works and public safety. From October 1996 to August 1997, he served as Acting County Executive. Before employment by Fairfax County, Tony was City Manager for the City of Falls Church, Deputy County Manager for Arlington County and served as a U.S. Marine Corps Officer in Vietnam.

Tony is a graduate of Hobart College and holds master degrees in Urban Affairs and Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech.

In 2002, Tony represented the county and received on its behalf the results of the Government Performance Project announced by Governing Magazine, which named Fairfax County "one of the best managed jurisdictions in America." The county received an overall grade of A- from Governing Magazine. Fairfax was one of only two jurisdictions to receive the highest grade awarded in the comprehensive study of management practices in 40 counties nationwide.

In February 2003, Tony received the Stone Practitioner Award from the American Society of Public Administration for his commitment to improve intergovernmental cooperation, especially in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, the anthrax incidents in 2001 and the regional sniper attacks in 2002.

In October 2007, Tony was elected as a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). He was formally inducted on November 15th during the academy's fall meeting in Washington, D.C. NAPA fellows are elected by their peers and have extensive experience in a variety of issues at the highest levels of public service. The principal criterion for selection as a fellow is a sustained and outstanding contribution to the field of public administration through public service or scholarship. Founded in 1967, NAPA is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan corporation chartered by the U.S. Congress.

