

'Question A': The cost of the ambulance fee campaign

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Md. -- A Montgomery County politician wants to know exactly how much taxpayer money the county spent campaigning for a recent proposal that did not pass.

Council member Phil Andrews, District 3, is pushing for a full report of how much taxpayer money the county's executive branch used in the extensive campaign for "Question A," a proposal that would have implemented an emergency medical services transport fee, which Montgomery County voters struck down in the general election by a 54 percent to 46 percent margin.

"I sent a memo over asking for a full accounting of what the executive branch spent lobbying county voters to vote for the 'ambulance fee law,' because they spent a lot," Andrews tells WTOP.

"They spent a lot on printing flyers up and they spent a huge amount assigning county personnel to the polls."

Now the county residents have a right to know what the executive branch spent on the campaign, Andrews says, regardless of how they voted on the issue.

He hopes to get a response early next week, as campaign finance reports are due to the state board of elections.

"I could probably come up with a ballpark figure, and it would be a very large figure. It would be well over \$100,000," he says.

The county executive had said the fee would have raised approximately \$12.5 million each year by billing insurance companies of residents with coverage.

"I think public understanding comes from it and accountability comes from it," he says.