



## Leggett's \$90K bodyguards still in budget

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Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett's proposed budget has the same \$90,000 salary and benefit package for his four bodyguards, an expense that some County Council members and union officials question.

"There's no demonstrated need that he needs some security," said Walt Bader, the chief negotiator for the Fraternal Order of Police union. Instead, Bader said, the cash-strapped county would be better served using the money to protect battered women and scared witnesses rather than having high-paid bodyguards at Leggett's "beck and call."

"It's a matter of priorities, they spend it on their priorities," Bader said.

Leggett's security team is part of the county's Security Services Division, and his bodyguards split their time between supervising building security operations and guarding the county executive, according to spokesman Patrick Lacefield. They are set to be furloughed, like most county government employees, a spokesman said.

The security team "is considered to be at the right level," and there have been threats made against Leggett, he said.

Last year, some County Council members questioned the cost and need of Leggett's security, given the county's perennial budget shortfalls and its low crime rate. *The Examiner* first reported the average pay and benefit package for a bodyguard is \$90,000 a year.

The county started protecting the county executive position during the Beltway sniper attacks in October 2002 and has kept the security in place ever since.

Fairfax County, which is similar to Montgomery in budget size, demographics and crime rates, does not have a security team for top elected officials.

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