

Montgomery resolution sparks peace protest

Council members say Lockheed killed the anti-military spending action

by Erin Cunningham, Staff Writer
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It is unclear whether a resolution introduced by the Montgomery County Council last week in support of a reduction in federal military spending will be voted on, angering peace activists who are pressing for the symbolic action.

About 40 people protested Tuesday outside the County Council office in Rockville during an event organized by Peace Action Montgomery.

The group's coordinator, Jean Athey, said Council President Valerie Ervin (D-Dist. 5) of Silver Spring withdrew the resolution after hearing concerns from defense contractor Lockheed Martin Corp., which has its headquarters in Montgomery.

"What kind of government is this?" Athey asked.

Ervin said she decided not to take a vote on the resolution because it did not have enough support to pass. Last week, the measure had five votes — the minimum number needed to pass.

But after Councilman George L. Leventhal (At-large) of Takoma Park and at least one other council member withdrew their support, Ervin said she changed her mind.

"My colleagues would have been called out," she said, referring to council members who changed their votes.

Leventhal said that is not true. No council members asked to have their names removed from the resolution, he said.

"It's very clear [Ervin] wishes to [shift] the blame to me," he said.

Last week the resolution was supported by Ervin and Leventhal, along with council members Craig L. Rice (D-Dist. 2) of Germantown; Marc B. Elrich (D-At large) of Takoma Park; and Nancy Navarro (D-Dist. 4) of Silver Spring.

“People backed off because of Lockheed,” Elrich said. “It’s disturbing.”

Montgomery saves \$6.3 million by cutting back on paper

In the past two years, Montgomery County has reduced the amount paper used to operate county government, saving \$6.3 million, according to the county.

Efforts to reduce paper consumption began in fiscal 2010 at the direction of County Executive Isiah Leggett (D). Montgomery officials said they have reduced paper consumption by about 40 percent.

In fiscal 2009, the county spent about \$6 million on printing and mailing — compared with \$2.75 million in fiscal 2011.

Leggett said reducing paper saves money and helps the environment.

The county estimates its paper reduction efforts have saved 3.8 million trees, 11,700 garbage trucks of trash and reduced greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to what is generated by 92,000 cars in a year.