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## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

For Immediate Release

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### **COUNTY COUNCIL CANDIDATE JUSTIN M. KISKA PROPOSES CHARTER AMENDMENT TO STRENGTHEN COUNCIL'S HAND IN THE BUDGET PROCESS**

FREDERICK, MD (January 15, 2018) – Frederick businessman Justin M. Kiska, Republican candidate for one of the two At-Large seats on the Frederick County Council, is proposing an amendment to the county's Charter, which would increase the Council's influence in the annual budget process. The proposed amendment would focus on Article 5, Section 6 – "Action on the Budget by the Council."

As the Charter currently stands, the County Executive will draft the budget and present it to the County Council. The Council, under the section at issue ". . . may decrease or delete any items in the Budget . . . The Council shall have no power to . . . increase any expenditures recommended by the Executive . . ."

Kiska's amendment would allow for the ability to increase expenditures in the Council's budget authority. Limiting the Council to only being able to decrease or eliminate spending gives the Executive an extraordinary amount of power. With the proposed change, it would allow the county's legislative arm to act as a true check and balance to the Executive; something the Council has had a hard time doing over the last three years.

"This amendment is something I have been calling for since the 2014 Elections," says Kiska. "It will be an important tool in allowing the County Council to be a true balance to the County Executive."

Any increase would need to be supported by a majority of the Council, and the money will need to be taken from another area of the budget, so that it will remain balanced. This would require a consensus before more money could be spent on a line item. For the amendment to the Charter to happen, a referendum would have to be held as laid out by the Maryland Constitution; the earliest possible vote not being until the 2018 Elections.

"I realize the danger in giving more people the power to spend tax payers' money," Kiska added, "and I do not advocate the unnecessary increase in spending as a matter of principle. But I do believe that the members of the Council should have more of a say in where county residents' tax dollars are spent. That power should not rest in the hands of a single person."

The current Council previously rejected the chance to advance a similar amendment to a referendum in 2016.

“In an ideal world, the County Executive and County Council would work together in drafting a budget so everyone was happy from the beginning,” Kiska continued. “Unfortunately, that isn’t how the budget process actually plays out. In a worst case scenario, under the current Charter, a despotic Executive could ride roughshod over the Council during the entire budget process. This amendment would encourage discussions and negotiations from the start.”

Justin M. Kiska is the President and Managing Director, and one of the owners, of The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre in Frederick, MD and the former President of the Board of Directors of The Golden Mile Alliance. Having grown up in Frederick County, he attended The George Washington University in Washington, DC, and is a former Special Assistant and Scheduler to former Transportation and Labor Secretary Elizabeth Dole. A lifelong Republican, he is currently running for one of the two At-Large County Council seats in this year’s election.

To learn more about Justin Kiska and his campaign for Frederick County Council, visit [www.JustinKiska.com](http://www.JustinKiska.com) and follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/KiskaForFrederick](http://www.Facebook.com/KiskaForFrederick).

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