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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL SALUTES JOSLYN N. WILLIAMS**

*First African American and Longest-Serving President of
Metropolitan Washington Council (MWC), AFL-CIO Set to Step Down*

WASHINGTON — For more than four decades, Joslyn N. Williams has been an influential voice for Washington-area labor and issues affecting working people. The Montgomery County Council honored his service and leadership during its session on Tuesday with a proclamation of admiration “for the service he has faithfully performed.”

The proclamation said Williams, who spearheaded a living wage campaign that culminated in passage of increased minimum wages in Montgomery County, the District and Prince George’s counties, “is an inspiration to all who have worked with him in the past and will continue to inspire all those who serve in the future.”

Williams expressed thanks to the Montgomery County Council, MWC members, and the community allies who waged a hard fought battle to increase the county’s minimum wage.

“I joined the AFL-CIO to fight for equality and social justice. Our movement helped create a middle class in this region, pushed for civil rights laws and was the major force in protecting the public sector—not only for workers, but for citizens of the jurisdictions we represent,” he said.

Councilmember Nancy Navarro, who serves as chair of the Montgomery County Council's Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee, called it a “bittersweet moment” for the Council. “While I'm delighted to recognize Joslyn Williams for his years of service fighting for working families, we all know what big shoes he is leaving behind to fill," she said

“Jos is a trailblazer who made it his life's work to focus on fairness for working people,” Navarro continued. “I have been honored to stand in unity with him and the AFL-CIO to bring economic justice to the workplace, improve the lives of working families and to promote social justice in our county, state and nation. We will continue the fight because there is still much to accomplish; however, it won't be the same without Jos on the front line with us."

Accolades have been pouring in for Williams since he announced he would not seek re-election as president. He will be presented with local labor’s top award, the JC Turner Award for Outstanding Trades Unionist of the Year, at the annual Evening With Labor on Saturday, March 12, 2016. Emceed by News4 politics and government reporter Tom Sherwood, the premier event begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Washington Hilton and will include further tributes to Williams from Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh and others.

During his tenure, which spans five U.S. presidencies, Williams has championed the rights of area union members to live the American Dream, presiding over frontline fights for fair wages, safe working conditions, and access to affordable health care and secure retirements. Over the last decade in particular, he spearheaded a vigorous living wage campaign that in 2015 led to passage of a minimum wage indexed to inflation—a first for the District of Columbia, which now claims one of the highest minimum wages in the nation. Montgomery and Prince George’s counties also passed minimum wage increases on his watch.

Among the “crown jewels” of his achievements is the formation of the Council’s United Way-funded charitable arm, the Community Services Agency (CSA), for which he serves as board president. The CSA works with union locals and community, religious, student and political allies to improve the lives of workers and their families throughout the greater metro Washington area by meeting their human and social services needs off the job.

In addition to steering the Council’s support for its affiliated locals, Williams has advanced a view of labor as part of a broader social and economic justice movement for racial equality—beginning in the 1960s with his position as shop steward at the Library of Congress and, later, as president of American Federation of Government Employees Local 1826.

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**About the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO**

The Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO comprises nearly 200 Council affiliates representing a broad cross-section of 150,000 area workers, from athletes to writers, government workers to the construction trades. As the voice of working people in local communities across the United States, the AFL-CIO Central Labor Councils are the heart of the American labor movement. By uniting the labor movement and mobilizing the local community, the Councils play a critical role on local, state and national issues as we work to accomplish our mission “To organize in the community to promote social justice for all working people.”