As County Executive, Angela Alsobrooks is raising taxes, including taxes on cell phones, to address the massive budget deficit she ran up while failing to deliver on even the most basic of government functions. She promised double the frequency of trash collection for residents, but once she got elected failed to deliver on her promise even once. She campaigned on a promise to improve education, but her handpicked Chair of the Board of Education was accused by the State Department of Education of "incompetency, willful neglect of duty and misconduct." Instead of addressing the problem as the schools declined, Alsobrooks said the school board was "not my responsibility" and opposed school choice for students in failing schools. Now she is running for the Senate on a promise to raise Social Security taxes and to prevent Marylanders from deducting their state taxes on their federal taxes, benefiting other states at the expense of Marylanders; both policies could cost Marylanders billions.

As County Executive, Angela Alsobrooks is raising taxes, including taxes on cell phones, to address the massive budget deficit she ran up.

- "Citing financial pressure, Alsobrooks is taking aim at a law that funnels most money generated by the local telecommunications and energy taxes to county schools under rules set long before the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law and its mandates took effect." "As local spending required by Maryland's landmark education law climbs, Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks (D) is asking state legislators for more discretion over how the county pays for schools. Citing financial pressure, Alsobrooks is taking aim at a law that funnels most money generated by the local telecommunications and energy taxes to county schools under rules set long before the Blueprint for Maryland's Future law and its mandates took effect." (Lateshia Beachum and Nicole Asbury, "Alsobrooks pitches shifting tax funds to pay for Pr. George's schools," *The Washington Post*, 2/8/24)
- Alsobrooks urged lawmakers to support two bills that would give her "more discretion over how to pay for schools." "Maryland House members from Prince George's County gave their support Friday to two bills that would give County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks (D) more discretion over how to pay for schools, a move officials said could offer some relief as local leaders confront a looming budget deficit this spring. The decision comes after weeks of conversations among county leaders over whether to expand how

Prince George's uses money from local telecommunications and energy taxes to pay for schools. The taxes currently can be spent on school operating expenditures and other categories such as instructional salaries and special education. Alsobrooks asked state lawmakers for more flexibility to help cover rising costs fueled by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, a law that calls for increased spending for schools from the state and counties, and to help the county close a \$171 million deficit. Alsobrooks sent a letter to the county's House delegation Thursday warning of the consequences of not passing both bills, saying it could require additional cuts to services. She also said the delays in voting on the bills have placed county officials in 'jeopardy' of not meeting their legally mandated March 15 deadline to submit a budget to the county council." (Lateshia Beachum and Nicole Asbury, "Pr. George's lawmakers back bills shifting tax funds to pay for schools," *The Washington Post*, 3/2/24)

- One of the bills authorizes "Prince George's County to impose an excise tax on telecommunications services in the county of up to \$3.50 per month, per telephone line." "This bill authorizes Prince George's County to impose an excise tax on telecommunications services in the county of up to \$3.50 per month, per telephone line. The excise tax may be in addition to the current sales and use tax imposed on telecommunications services. The bill enables the Prince George's County government to use the proceeds from the local telecommunications taxes to meet the State funding requirements for the local school system under the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement and local share provision. Under current law, revenue proceeds from the telecommunications tax cannot be used to supplant local funding required under the MOE or local share provision." (Maryland General Assembly 2024 Session, House Bill 398: FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE: Third Reader Revised, accessed 7/8/24)
  - Prince George's County already imposes a 9% sales and use tax on telecommunications services.

## **Analysis**

**Current Law:** Prince George's County imposes a 9% sales and use tax on telecommunications services in the county.

(Maryland General Assembly 2024 Session, House Bill 398: FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE: Third Reader - Revised, accessed 7/8/24)

Editor's Note: Cell phones are considered to be telecommunications services.

• Under Angela Alsobrooks's leadership, "the budget shortfall this year is \$171 million." "The budget shortfall this year is \$171 million due to factors including higher interest rates that have hurt home sales and reduced tax income; the ending of federal pandemic funds; rising inflation; the increasing impacts of climate change; and increasing state requirements for education funding." (Prince George's County Council, Prince George's County Council Adopts \$5.46 Billion FY 2025 Budget, accessed 7/8/24)

- "To cover our projected \$171 million deficit we've made some very difficult decisions,' Alsobrooks said." (Scott Broom, "Prince George's county facing budget shortfall," <u>WUSA 9</u>, 3/15/24)
- In December 2023, budget forecasts for Prince George's County showed a projected deficit gap in the budget that grows from \$183M in FY 2025 to as much as \$387M by 2030 without revenue growth or spending cuts. "When the budget finally passed the county council in May, a \$60M deficit had to be closed with rainy day funds. Now, 7News learned that the latest forecasts for the county show a projected deficit gap that grows from \$183M in FY 2025 to as much as \$387M by 2030 unless revenue grows or spending is Cut." (Brad Bell, "Prince George's County confronts looming budget deficit, banking on future economic growth," ABC 7, 12/04.23)

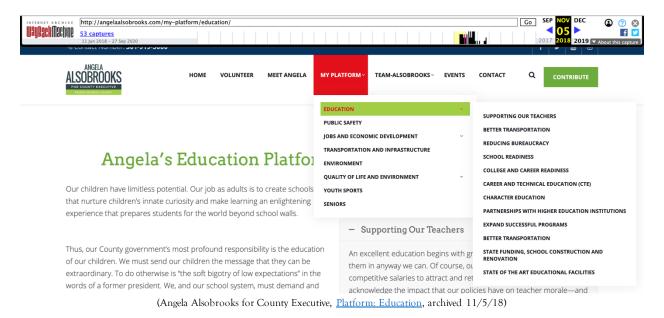
Angela Alsobrooks campaigned on a promise to double the frequency of trash collection for residents, but when she got elected as Prince George's County Executive, she failed to deliver on her promise even once.

- During her 2018 campaign for Prince George's County Executive, Alsobrooks pledged to reinstate twice-weekly trash collection. "Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks knew when she took office that a top item on her agenda involved one of government's least glamorous services: trash collection. Her predecessor, Rushern L. Baker III, took away the second day of trash collection in the Washington suburb to save money and bring Prince George's policies in line with neighboring jurisdictions. Alsobrooks and her competitors in last year's Democratic primary vowed to return the popular extra service, drawing cheers on the campaign trail from residents who felt blindsided by Baker's move." (Rachel Chason, "Politics, trash and fiscal realities collide in Prince George's County," Washington Post, 4/22/19)
  - O Alsobrooks's predecessor had instituted a policy of once-weekly trash collection. "Her predecessor, Rushern L. Baker III, took away the second day of trash collection in the Washington suburb to save money and bring Prince George's policies in line with neighboring jurisdictions. Alsobrooks and her competitors in last year's Democratic primary vowed to return the popular extra service, drawing cheers on the campaign trail from residents who felt blindsided by Baker's move." (Rachel Chason, "Politics, trash and fiscal realities collide in Prince George's County," Washington Post, 4/22/19)
- Instead of returning to twice-weekly trash collection, Alsobrooks offered an expanded composting pickup to "a tiny sliver" of residents. "Returning to two-day-a-week trash collection would have cost between \$7 million and \$10 million and meant renegotiating contracts with 15 garbage companies. Alsobrooks asked her Department of the Environment to come up with a more fiscally responsible option, which she is rolling out at town hall meetings. She says the county will expand its 200-household composting pickup program to include 3,000 homes next fiscal year a tiny sliver in a county of more

than 900,000 residents. The program, which offers weekly curbside pickup of food scraps that are then taken to a central composting facility, will grow over three years to include all households that want to participate, said acting county environmental director Joe Gill." (Rachel Chason, "Politics, trash and fiscal realities collide in Prince George's County," <u>Washington Post</u>, 4/22/19)

When running for Prince George's County Executive in 2018, Alsobrooks campaigned on improving education; however, her handpicked Chair of the Board of Education was accused by the State Department of Education of "incompetency, willful neglect of duty and misconduct," and instead of addressing the problem as schools declined, Alsobrooks said the school board was "not my responsibility."

 According to an archived version of her website, Angela Alsobrooks made education a key part of her platform.



- O Alsobrooks said that "our education budget reflects our priorities," and promised to direct resources in her budget "to the most important part of our school system—the classroom." "Our education budget reflects our priorities. My budget will direct resources to the most important part of our school system—the classroom. Because county tax payers deserve to know where their dollars are going, I will publish online budgets for each of our schools, along with the school system's budget. I want everyone to see firsthand the decisions we are making and demonstrate our commitment to putting resources in the classroom." (Angela Alsobrooks for County Executive, Platform: Education, archived 11/5/18)
- Alsobrooks pledged to "work to deliver the results our students deserve." "We
  must depoliticize education in the county and completely focus on our students'
  needs and those of our teachers and parents. Our full attention must be on K-12

education, but also on pre-kindergarten and child care services, making sure our children are ready to start school, vocational and technical education, college readiness, higher education offerings, and education/training for those already in the workforce. With our partners in higher education, labor, employers and-most importantly—parents, we will work to deliver the results our students deserve." (Angela Alsobrooks for County Executive, Platform: Education, archived 11/5/18)

- In January 2021, Alsobrooks named Juanita Miller as Prince George's County Board of Education Chair. "Prince George's County Executive Angela D. Alsobrooks (D) named Juanita Miller, a former state delegate, to succeed Alvin Thornton as the chair of Prince George's County Board of Education." (Elizabeth Shwe, "Juanita Miller Succeeds Alvin Thornton as Chair of Prince George's Board of Education," Maryland Matters, 1/8/21)
- ABC7 News: "Almost from the moment that she was appointed chair of the Prince George's County School Board in 2021, Juanita Miller's relationship with her elected school board members has been frosty at best." (Kevin Lewis, "Judge to oversee misconduct trial against Prince George's County Board of Education chair," ABC7 News, 11/30/22)
- At Miller's direction, the Board of Education's ethics panel produced a false report accusing Miller's opponents of wrongdoing; the panel later resigned en masse. "That contentious relationship came to a head when Miller had the board's ethics panel produce a report. It accused board members of wrongdoing, but the accusations were proven false. The ethics panel resigned en masse. Back in the spring, six school board members asked the Maryland State Board of Education to remove Miller from office, accusing her of incompetence and misconduct, among other things." (Kevin Lewis, "Judge to oversee misconduct trial against Prince George's County Board of Education chair," ABC7 News, 11/30/22)
- The fake ethics report, commissioned by Miller, capped weeks of dysfunction, infighting, and mistrust on the Board, which culminated in several members ("perhaps a majority") calling for Miller's resignation. "The Prince George's County Board of Education is in crisis. The panel, which is made up of nine elected and four appointed members, is riven by conflict and has splintered into angry factions. There is deep mistrust and a feeling of grievance all around. While the board has had rocky relations, bordering on dysfunction, for some time, things have deteriorated in recent weeks — with the filing of ethics charges against almost all of the panel's elected members, a formal push to remove the panel's chairwoman, and more. The strife and legal maneuvering, most of which is being reported for the first time, have greatly alarmed top county officials and community leaders. Board members have differing takes on what has precipitated the bad blood, making it difficult to gain a clear picture of events. This much is known: Many elected members of the board – perhaps a majority – believe the only path forward is for Chairwoman Juanita D. Miller to go. Earlier this month, six members formally petitioned the Maryland State Board of Education to remove her from her post." (Kevin Lewis, "Judge to oversee misconduct trial against Prince George's County Board of Education chair," ABC7 News, 11/30/22)

- In 2022, Miller faced "charges of incompetency, willful neglect of duty and misconduct" from the Maryland State Department of Education, who accused her of withholding ethics complaints and illegally procuring services. "Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks asked Board of Education Chair Juanita Miller to step down effective immediately as Miller faces charges of incompetency, willful neglect of duty and misconduct in office by the Maryland State Department of Education. According to a letter obtained by News4, the state board alleges Miller withheld ethics complaints from board members and illegally procured services without the board's approval." (Tracee Wilkins, "County Exec Asks for Prince George's School Board Chair's Resignation," NBC4 News, 6/2/22)
- When asked about "turmoil and drama" on the Board of Education, Alsobrooks said the board was "not my responsibility." "Not my responsibility' that's what Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks said on Friday after FOX 5's Ayesha Khan asked 'what is next for the county's school board?' This comes after Alsobrooks blasted the board earlier this week, for the ongoing turmoil and drama within the school district." (Ayesha Khan, "Prince George's County executive says she is not responsible for school board's conduct," Fox DC, 8/6/21)
- According to the Maryland school report card for the 2018 2019 school year, PGC elementary schools significantly underperformed, failed to reach their annual target for "academic achievement," and failed to improve in the areas of "academic progress," "progress in achieving English language proficiency," and "school quality and student success."

Maryland DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		e George's Co 2019 School Repo			
Prince George's County (16) Grade Levels: Elementary / Mid	dle / High				
		DO OVERALLS			
HOW DID MY ELEMENTA	ARY SCHOOLS	DO OVERALL!			
<b>HOW DID MY ELEMENT</b> Overall Elementary school grade status is also provided.			nd includes possible p	points and earned poi	nts. Annual targe
Overall Elementary school grade			nd includes possible p	ooints and earned poi	nts. Annual targe
Overall Elementary school grade status is also provided.		s provided by indicator a			-
Overall Elementary school grade status is also provided.  INDICATOR		s provided by indicator a	EARNED POINTS*	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMEN
Overall Elementary school grade status is also provided. INDICATOR Academic Achievement	span performance i	s provided by indicator a  POSSIBLE POINTS  20.0	EARNED POINTS*	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMEN

(Maryland State Department of Education, Report Card: 2019, accessed 5/15/24)

According to the Maryland school report card for the 2018 – 2019 school year, PGC middle schools underperformed, failed to reach their annual target for academic achievement, and failed to improve in the areas of "academic progress," "progress in achieving English language proficiency," and "school quality and student success."

## **HOW DID MY MIDDLE SCHOOLS DO OVERALL?**

Overall Middle school grade span performance is provided by indicator and includes possible points and earned points. Annual target status is also provided.

INDICATOR	POSSIBLE POINTS	EARNED POINTS*	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMENT
Academic Achievement	20.0	7.6	0	0
Academic Progress	31.5	17.1	n/a	8
Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency	10.0	2.9	•	8
School Quality and Student Success	35.0	24.5	n/a	8

<sup>\*</sup> Earned points may not equal total points due to rounding. 🗸 =Met 🔞 =Not Met

(Maryland State Department of Education, Report Card: 2019, accessed 5/15/24)

According to the Maryland school report card for the 2018 – 2019 school year, PGC high schools underperformed, failed to reach their annual target for "academic achievement" and "graduation rate," and failed to improve in the areas of "graduation rate," "progress in achieving English language proficiency," and "readiness for post-secondary success."

Overall High school grade span performance is provi is also provided.	ded by indicator and inci	udes possible points a	ind earned points. An	nuai target status
INDICATOR	POSSIBLE POINTS	EARNED POINTS*	ANNUAL TARGET	IMPROVEMENT
Academic Achievement	30.0	13.2	0	0
Graduation Rate	15.0	11.9	0	0
Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency	10.0	4.2	0	0
Readiness for Post-Secondary Success	10.0	4.7	n/a	0
School Quality and Student Success	35.0	13.9	n/a	0

(Maryland State Department of Education, Report Card: 2019, accessed 5/15/24)

- Reporting from 2021 shows that Prince George's County students were failing "at a rate nearly double" that of 2020. "New data shows students in Prince George's County Public Schools are failing at a rate nearly double this time last year. FOX 5 has been working to get data on student achievement since January and finally got it this week through an open records request. The data shows elementary students have been impacted the worst year over year, with nearly three times as many children failing." (Lindsay Watts, "New data shows almost twice as many PGCPS students failing over last year," Fox 5 DC, 3/5/21)
  - o Among the district, over 40,000 students were failing at least one core subject, despite thousands of unexcused absences and drops in enrollment. "The numbers the school district provided look at students failing at least one core subject for the second quarter. District-wide, there are over 40,000 students in that category, which has nearly doubled compared to last year. That's despite enrollment being down over 4,600 students and over 3,300 being classified as "whereabouts unknown" after

missing at least 10 days unexcused." (Lindsay Watts, "New data shows almost twice as many PGCPS students failing over last year," Fox 5 DC, 3/5/21)

"Across the district, 52 percent of Hispanic elementary students are failing a core class, the highest percentage of any group of students and the biggest jump over last year when 44 percent were failing." (Lindsay Watts, "New data shows almost twice as many PGCPS students failing over last year," Fox 5 DC. 3/5/21)

## Angela Alsobrooks opposes school choice for students in failing schools.

• In August 2023, Alsobrooks indicated on an NEA candidate survey that she opposes private school vouchers, K-12 education savings accounts, K-12 tuition tax credits, and 529 savings plans for K-12 private school tuition or homeschooling. (2024 U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, 8/9/23)

	school Vouchers and Related Privatization Schemes
2	9. Please indicate whether you support the following: (Select all that apply)
_	Private school vouchers
_	Education savings accounts for K-12 students
_	Tuition tax credits for K-12 students
_	529 savings plans for K-12 private school tuition or home schooling
<u>&gt;</u>	None of the above
(2024 L	U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, 8/9/23

• In August 2023, Alsobrooks indicated on an NEA candidate survey that she opposes private school vouchers for students from military families, Bureau of Indian Education school students, Washington, D.C. students, students with disabilities, students in foster care, or victims of bullying or harassment. (2024 U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, 8/9/23)

30. Do you support private school vouchers for any of these specific populations of
students? (Select all that apply)
Students from military families
Students who attend Bureau of Indian Education schools
Students who reside in Washington, D.C.
Students with disabilities
Students who have been bullied or harassed
Students who have been placed in foster care
X None of the above

(2024 U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, 8/9/23)

• Private school vouchers allow parents and students to choose better schools instead of being trapped in failing schools. "The oldest school voucher program was created in Milwaukee in 1990 with a singular focus on African-American students living in poverty. This school year, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program issued nearly 28,000 vouchers for low-income kids to attend dozens of private and religious schools at public expense... Fuller, a professor at Marquette University, is one of the architects of the voucher program. He's also a former superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools and founder of the

Black Alliance for Educational Options, a national pro-voucher and school choice group. Fuller's support for vouchers is pretty straight-forward. He says most of Milwaukee's African-American students are trapped in failing schools. These kids' parents, says Fuller, should have the right to choose a better school for their children because very little else that the African-American community has fought for has helped rescue poor black children in need of good schools." (Claudio Sanchez, "Lessons On Race And Vouchers From Milwaukee," NPR, 5/16/17)

## Angela Alsobrooks supports raising the cap on Social Security payroll taxes, which could cost Marylanders billions in higher taxes.

(2024 U.S

• Alsobrooks supports raising the cap on Social Security payroll taxes. (2024 U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, Accessed 6/7/24)

Retirement Security
48. Do you support eliminating or reforming the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision? _Xyesno
49. Do you support raising the Social Security payroll tax cap?Xyesno
Senate Candidate Ouestionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, Accessed 6/7/24)

- Eliminating the cap on Social Security payroll taxes completely would raise taxes nationally by nearly \$200 billion per year. "For example, total wages covered by Social Security in 2022 were \$10.3 trillion, with \$8.7 trillion of that amount below the taxable maximum. Removing the limit would increase payroll taxes by nearly \$200 billion per year, assuming no offsetting effects. [22] However, assuming employers offset their share of the additional payroll taxes by reducing their workers' wages, payroll taxes and income taxes would be reduced by \$44 billion, resulting in a net revenue increase of \$155 billion. [23]" (Steve Robinson, "The Limit On Social Security Taxes And Benefits," Concord Coalition, 12/27/23)
- In Maryland, around ten percent of workers earn more than the payroll tax cap and would owe more if the cap were eliminated. "Eventually, all workers with earnings that exceed Social Security's tax cap would owe more payroll tax under Biden's plan than under current law. Although these high-earners make up only about 6 percent of the national workforce, they are more common in high-wage, high-cost states like Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. But our analysis of American Community Survey data shows that even in those states, only about 10 percent of workers now earn more than Social Security's tax cap." (Richard W. Johnson, Karen E. Smith, Melissa M. Favreault, "Biden's Social Security Plan Would Not Increase Taxes for Middle-Class Workers," Urban Institute, 10/22/20)

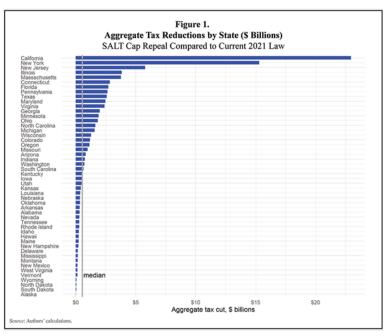
Angela Alsobrooks opposes repealing the SALT tax deduction cap; the cap prevents

Marylanders from deducting their state taxes on their federal taxes, benefiting other states while costing Marylanders billions.

 In August 2023, Alsobrooks indicated on an NEA candidate survey that she did not support repealing the cap on SALT tax deductions. (2024 U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, 8/9/23)

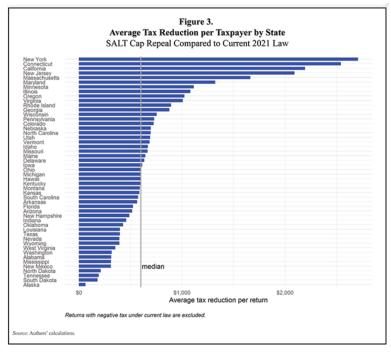
	32. Please indicate which changes to the U.S. tax code you support in order to ensure we have the revenue needed to make critical investments in our students and communities.
	(Select all that apply)
	Reducing corporate tax rates
	XIncreasing corporate tax rates
	XClosing corporate tax loopholes
	Reducing high-income individual's tax rate
	XIncreasing high-income individual's tax rate
	Repealing the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions
	No change
(2024	U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire, NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, 8/9/23

- The \$10,000 SALT deduction limit was enacted as part of the 2017 tax overhaul and has become a key issue for lawmakers from high-tax states including New York and California. "Enacted through former President Donald Trump's 2017 tax overhaul, the state and local tax cap has been a key issue for certain lawmakers in high-tax states, such as New York, New Jersey, California and Illinois, because residents can't deduct more than \$10,000 in state and local levies on their federal returns." (Kate Dore, "House lawmakers relaunch the SALT caucus. Here's what to know about the \$10,000 deduction limit for state and local taxes," CNBC, 2/13/23)
- Repealing the SALT tax deduction cap would reduce aggregate taxes for Marylanders by billions of dollars, more than 40 other states. "We estimate that over 50 percent of the reduction in tax liabilities would accrue to taxpayers in four states: California (25.1 percent), New York (16.8 percent), New Jersey (6.4 percent), and Illinois (4.2 percent). (See Figure 1.) The top 10 states by impact, California through Maryland in the figure, would garner over 70 percent of the liability reduction." (Donald J. Boyd and Matthew Jensen, "Repealing the SALT Cap: State-by-State Impacts," <u>TaxNotes</u>, 10/25/21)



(Donald J. Boyd and Matthew Jensen, "Repealing the SALT Cap: State-by-State Impacts," <u>TaxNotes</u>, 10/25/21)

Repealing the SALT tax deduction cap would reduce the tax burden of individual
 Maryland taxpayers by over \$1,000 a year, more than 45 other states. (Donald J. Boyd and Matthew
 Jensen, "Repealing the SALT Cap: State-by-State Impacts," <u>TaxNotes</u>, 10/25/21)



(Donald J. Boyd and Matthew Jensen, "Repealing the SALT Cap: State-by-State Impacts," <u>TaxNotes</u>, 10/25/21)