Republican Talbot County Council Candidate Fiscal Pledge to Talbot County Taxpayers

Whereas, the State of Maryland, in fiscal year 2028, is expected to have a budget shortfall of $3 billion dollars; and

Whereas, long-term projections expect Maryland's budget shortfall to continue to grow over the next several years; and

Whereas, Democrat Governor Wes Moore and his Democrat-controlled Legislature are currently cost-shifting their poor fiscal performance onto Maryland counties and their taxpayers, including our beloved Talbot County, in the form of unfunded mandates and increased property tax assessments; and

Whereas, in the State of Maryland there is a clear, repeated pattern of poor fiscal policy by Democrat leadership and a clear, repeated pattern of sound fiscal policy from Republican leadership; and

Whereas, Talbot County, under Republican County Council majorities since 2006, has consistently maintained fiscally-sound balanced budgets, healthy fund balances, and low property and income tax rates; and

Whereas, Talbot County Republican County Council majorities, in conjunction with very talented County financial staff, consistently use the "underestimate revenues" and "overestimate expenditures" mentality when generating and approving annual county budgets; and

Whereas, Talbot County residents currently enjoy the lowest property tax rate in the State of Maryland, thanks to a strong County Charter, with a real property tax revenue growth cap of two percent per year; and

Whereas, Talbot County residents currently enjoy the second-lowest income tax rate in the State of Maryland; and

Whereas, Talbot County is currently sitting at a very healthy approximate reserve fund-to-budget ratio of 67% along with stellar credit ratings by both Moody's and Fitch; and

Whereas, it is clear that sound fiscal policy, balanced budgets, low property taxes, low income taxes, and full support for public safety, first responders, schools, and all essential government services can live together in harmony as shown by Republican-controlled Talbot County Councils since 2006;

Now, Therefore, we, the 2026 Republican Talbot County Council candidates do affix our names and signatures to this Fiscal Pledge and commit to the following if elected this November:

1. To ensure that Talbot County residents continue to enjoy and benefit from the lowest property tax rate in the State of Maryland.
2. To ensure that Talbot County residents continue to enjoy and benefit from the second-lowest income tax rate in the State of Maryland and will make a concerted effort to move Talbot County to the lowest income tax rate in the State of Maryland.
3. To continue to respect the Talbot County Charter, namely Section 614 in this matter, and ensure that any Talbot County property tax increases over and above the property tax cap are put directly into the hands of the Talbot County voter via ballot referendum.
4. To continue to itemize, on Talbot County property tax bills, all unfair State of Maryland unfunded tax mandates.
5. To make fiscally-prudent decisions that lead to an overall great quality of life for all citizens in Talbot County just as Republican-majority Talbot County Councils have done since 2006.

Given by our hands this 21st day of September in the year of our Lord

Two Thousand and Twenty-Six.

Chuck Callahan	Frank Gunsallus	Christian Mackendrick	Dave Stepp	Wade Strickland