

Good afternoon Councilmembers. My name is Jeff Goldman, Chair of the Montgomery County Interagency Commission on Homelessness. I thank for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the proposed legislative changes to the ICH statute. I want to specifically express my gratitude to Councilmember Glass for leading the Council's effort on making homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time only experience for all.

In the spring of 2019, a subgroup of ICH commissioners came together to draft recommendations to update and revise the existing legislation. Along with myself, the group members included Eneshal Miller, Public Member Commissioner, Louise Kauffman of the City of Gaithersburg, Susie Sinclair-Smith of Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Shane Rock of Interfaith Works, Amanda Chesney of Catholic Charities, and Amanda Harris from the Department of Health and Human Services. Our goal was to improve the infrastructure of the ICH and its committees to be more effectively and better align with best practices.

In summary, the new bill achieves the following:

- Emphasizes the need to “end and prevent” homelessness rather than just address the issue.
- Elevates the approach of Housing First from that of a single initiative to a core value of the homeless continuum of care.
- Allows flexibility in recruitment and selection of members based on goals and priorities.
- Balances the overrepresentation of criminal justice and government generally
- Increases emphasis on involvement of private organizations, like business, housing development, and philanthropy
- Establishes a governance committee to guide the work of the Commission and its committees

It should be noted that ICH membership is not only a mechanism to participate and have being a member is certainly not the only way to participate in and have influence over the work of the Continuum of Care and the ICH. In partnership with the office of Services to End and Prevent Homelessness, the ICH regularly recruits various stakeholders to sit on committees, subcommittees, and work groups. The most recent example of community engagement is the development of the Strategic Plan to End Homelessness where more than 20 organizations and 100 plus individuals provided critical feedback and suggestions on the strategies, values, and action plan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Interagency Commission on Homelessness and thank you to all the community members, nonprofits, and government agencies engaged in the difficult but important work of eradicating homelessness.