



Testimony on Bill 51-20 Landlord-Tenant Relations – Window Guards

Coalition Homes and Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless

January 11, 2021

Good afternoon Council President Hucker and members of the Montgomery County Council. My name is Jeffrey Mosley and I am testifying on behalf of Coalition Homes (CH) and the Montgomery County Coalition of the Homeless (MCCH). MCCH provides solutions in Montgomery County to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. This mission is underscored by our vision to build a community where everyone has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home. MCCH's affiliate, CH, owns, manages and seeks to expand the supply of the county's affordable housing dedicated as permanent supportive housing (PSH).

CH and MCCH generally applaud the Window Guards bill 51-20. As an owner and manager of 186 affordable PSH units across Montgomery County dedicated to housing families with no or very low incomes and who have struggled with homelessness, the health and safety of our residents are paramount. The requirement of window guards to ensure the safety of children, particularly at or under 10 years of age, will help the landlord and tenant from unimaginable disasters. While we understand and agree with the spirit of the legislation, we believe that more information and consideration as to burden is required. We encourage, for example, the Council to estimate the cost burden based on industry standards and provide funding to help defray the cost of purchasing, installing and managing these devices. This bill comes at a time when owners and managers are substantially impacted by COVID-19 and an increased, unsupported requirement that would include added inspection accountability, so this presents an added cost and compliance burden at a very precarious time. Greater clarification is also needed on the second condition where guards will be required, if a tenant of a unit requests a window guard in writing. It is unclear if the second area is required even if children are not present in the unit. The net effect is that owners of multifamily properties may have to install window guards in all windows in each habitable room in each unit.

MCCH and CH supports efforts to maintain the safety of one of our most vulnerable residents, children. We hope the Council will look at the burden this requirement will place on property owners and managers, particularly those serving families with no or very low incomes. We look forward to working with the Council to ensure that our residents live in very safe environments.

Thank you for your time and giving me the opportunity to share these observations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JM', with a large loop at the end of the second letter.

Jeffrey Mosley
Director, Coalition Homes
Chief Real Estate Officer, Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless