



September 14, 2021

Councilmember Tom Hucker, President  
Councilmember Gabe Albornaz, Vice President  
Montgomery County Council  
Stella Werner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Ave  
Rockville, MD 20850

**RE: CASA Testimony in SUPPORT of Council Bill 30-21, Landlord-Tenant Relations - Restrictions During Emergencies - Extended Limitations Against Rent Increases and Late Fees**

Dear Council President Hucker and Members of the County Council,

CASA offers our strong support of Bill 30-21. CASA is the region's largest community organization serving the immigrant community with a growing membership of over 115,000 Black and brown immigrant and working families, over 20,000 of whom live across Montgomery County. Our mission is to create a more just society by building power and improving the quality of life in working-class and immigrant communities. We envision a future where our members stand in their own power, our families live free of discrimination and fear, and our diverse communities thrive as we work with our partners to achieve full human rights for all.

Bill 30-21 aims to extend necessary protections for Montgomery County working families as they continue to navigate the raging pandemic. Bill 30-21 would extend the limitation on rent increases from 90 days to one year after the expiration of the public health emergency and prohibit charging late fees accrued during, and for one year after the emergency. We applaud the foresight this council had in championing housing security for Montgomery County families at the beginning of the pandemic with the passage of the expedited legislation to limit rent increases last April - and now, call on the council to continue their leadership on behalf of working families who are still greatly impacted by the pandemic.

Countless CASA members have shared experiences of landlords providing month-to-month leases who are waiting for the current protections to expire so they can raise rents higher than the

2.6% cap provided in the voluntary rent guidelines. In this ongoing crisis, we can't afford to price out our most vulnerable. The extension of this protection for an additional year will make the difference for many families who are struggling to find employment, receive rental assistance, and put food on the table.

Housing is a critical element of infrastructure. It is our core belief that housing is a human right and the greatest asset in any community is its people – our community's health, prosperity, and quality of life are at the core of how we should measure community sustainability. Montgomery County has a responsibility to ensure that all of those elements are taken into consideration as they craft policy. The protections in Bill 30-21 are simply an additional tool that working families will have on their side. Housing cost-burdens are most prevalent among renters, many of whom are essential workers - the heroes who continue to keep our economy running as we continue to work from home. Further, Bill 30-21 drives Montgomery County closer to its vision of racial equity, as immigrants and other residents of color, who have been most impacted by the effects of the emergency, face a longer economic recovery period.

CASA strongly supports Bill 30-21 and respectfully urges the council to vote favorably.

Respectfully submitted,

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