

March 7, 2023

Re: Bill 6-23, Housing - Sharing Economy Rental

Council President Glass, Council Vice-President Friedson and members of the County Council:

My name is Patricia Van Ryckeghem and I live in Chevy Chase. I am writing to support Bill 6-23, which recognizes Sharing Economy Rentals. This bill would regulate the hourly rental of a home's amenities.

I am supporting this Bill because my rental was shut down by the County not because I was a nuisance but simply because I was told there were no regulations for such a rental. A lack of regulations meant that the act itself was illegal. This is mind boggling as such a mindset would mean anything the County does not explicitly regulate would be disallowed. This could mean the simple act of placing a kiddie pool in your front yard for your kids to enjoy could be deemed a fine worthy offense because the County has not taken the steps to regulate such actions. I am happy to see the County take the steps to regulate home amenity rentals in order to let homeowners share their amenities without being forced to become part of a greater legal debate.

We started renting our pool with the Swimply app in 2020 and I was lucky enough to host many times to a variety of guests. When renting, my husband and I were respectful of our neighbors, renting during reasonable hours and never allowing large parties or events to occur. My guests included couples looking for a quiet moment, families and individuals who were immunocompromised, pregnant women needing exercise, and small birthday parties for children. I even had a family who booked twice a week all summer so their two kids had activities in a safe environment.

We started renting our pool during the pandemic. At that time I was unaware of Swimply, but acquaintances asked me if we would consider renting our pool on the app as they had nowhere to go swimming. While we were enticed to help people out of isolation, we were further propelled to rent in order to make up for lost income. Unfortunately, my husband was not allowed to continue working during the first months of COVID. Our financials were of such a concern that we actually were considering not opening our pool because the operating costs were too much for us. Renting our pool started as a financial lifesaver and turned into community outreach where we could share our assets with others.

The last few years have been tumultuous to say the least. Home amenity rentals allow financial security for many, while also creating better access for all, and offering a bit of joy to those who partake.

I thank you for your time and respectfully ask that you pass Bill 6-23 in order to ensure homeowners, like myself, may continue to have the option to not only serve their community but ensure their own financial security by sharing what assets they have.

Sincerely,

Patricia Van Ryckeghem