

Alexis Kurtz
Silver Spring, MD

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE HOME ACT, BILL 16-23;
AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE 'ANTI-RENT GOUGING' BILL 15-23**

Hi, my name is Alexis Kurtz and I am from Silver Spring, in District 4. I am testifying in support of the HOME act, Bill 16-23, and in opposition of Bill 15-23.

As a child, my family was extremely poor. My mother was in and out of hospitals my entire childhood, so we could not afford a home. We moved from rental to rental for over a decade, to the point where I lived in over 20 houses before I turned 16. This caused an extreme amount of stress and anxiety in my life. I am thankful enough, lucky enough, to have been able to afford a home of my own for the last three years.

Unfortunately, it looks like I will not be able to for much longer.

I am a middle school teacher, which has been difficult lately. I cannot afford new shoes, decent clothes, or even three full meals most days. When gas prices rose, I was lucky enough to spend a few nights with family who lives closer to my work. I'm lucky enough to work in a school that gives out free breakfast, which I can eat for lunch.

Being a teacher is the only job I have ever wanted to do, but it just is not a sustainable career in Montgomery County. I got a 3% cost of living adjustment this year, but my rent is increasing 7%.

I can't afford the rent increase, but I can't afford to move either. Rent everywhere in the county is still rising, and there doesn't seem to be an end. If my rent increases again, I'll be forced to either move out of MoCo or leave the field of education altogether.

The county cannot concurrently allow housing prices to increase while not also providing adequate salaries to the teachers, nurses, and essential workers who work for the betterment of our community. I worry how the anti-rent gouging bill (15-23), which is certainly misnamed, will impact our children's education.

Montgomery County Public Schools do not have enough educators. The entire country is in a teacher shortage, and right now over 50% of MoCo teachers live outside of the county.

Montgomery County has already lost too many teachers because of the pandemic. How many teachers can Montgomery County afford to lose before our education system completely falls apart?

Teachers cannot continue to live their lives off of luck and the kindness of others. We need your help. Please support and pass the HOME Act, so that educators like me can receive the dignity and stability we are in desperate need of.