



SEIU Local 500

901 Russell Avenue, Suite 300, Gaithersburg, MD 20879

March 29TH, 2023

RE: "Anti-Rent Gouging" Bill 15-23 in Opposition / "HOME Act" Bill 16-23 in Support

President Glass and the Montgomery County Council Members,

SEIU Local 500 would like to thank The Montgomery County Council for working to pass rent stabilization. We know this is an important and complicated issue for all of us. With historical data showing that average rent increases are less than 3 percent, we support capping annual rent increases at this rate. Hundreds of people are being displaced each month by rent increases of 5% or more. Our union members who work to keep our public schools running safely and efficiently should be able to continue to live and work in this county.

SEIU Local 500's goal is to ensure the people who care for and educate our children have peace of mind and stability. However, according to our sister union MCEA, over 60% of educators cannot afford a life in Montgomery County. We believe housing to be a basic human right no different than healthcare or an education.

When families that are already struggling to pay for housing face potential increases in rent, they have to decide between food, clothes, healthcare, or keeping a roof over their heads. Meaningful rent stabilization must be a key part of the long term solution to responsible growth and development in our beloved county.

Of the two solutions put forward by this council we believe the Home Act provides the predictability that allows both tenants and landlords to plan for a stable future. Adopting the HOME Act would provide an immediate tool to curb the County's current crisis of evictions, displacement, and homelessness. Furthermore, the HOME Act would create a new source of income for Montgomery County to create the affordable housing we all know we need, by establishing a vacancy tax to disincentivize landlords from keeping units empty while also funding more housing. Families with children face housing insecurity are affected in their growth and learning. Put the future of our children over the profits of a select few.

Thank you for your kind consideration and we ask that you support bill 16-23.

Christopher C. Cano, MPA
Coordinator for Member Political Engagement
SEIU Local 500