

Testimony on the County Budget, Bill 15-23 - Landlord-Tenant Relations -Anti Rent Gouging Protections and Bill 16-23 - Landlord-Tenant Relations – Rent Stabilization (The HOME Act)

Dear Members of the County Council,

As a Montgomery County homeowner and Vice Chair of the RESJAC I write today to urge you to limit any property tax increase to the same percentage increase you limit rent increases.

Inflation is hitting all of us. As a federal employee my last COLA was less than half the rate of inflation. At the same time I received my annual property tax assessment which increased my property assessment by \$27,000. Meanwhile my home’s value has fallen nearly \$70,000 since last summer.

As a long-time former renter in the County I certainly appreciate the intent behind rent control legislation. I experienced myself the rising costs of renting when The Blairs raised my rent well over the county guidelines in 2010.

But treating homeowners in the county less favorably than renters is fundamentally unfair. Homeowners have invested in the County and are the larger part of the tax base. Any limitations on increasing rent need to be tied to limitations on property tax increases.

The county should be cutting budgets and tightening belts as inflation rises, not socking it to a middle class that is getting hit by higher prices on their water and electric bills, gasoline, eggs...

Any rent caps must be implemented with comparable property tax caps. Treat citizens equally. That is the essence of social justice.

Jared Hautamaki

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