

Kush Kharod
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Hello,

My name is Kush Kharod and I oppose Bill 15-23 and support the HOME Act, Bill 16-23, because I want to see families thrive and find a safe and stable home in Montgomery County.

My parents moved here from the 80s from India to raise me and my sister in a better world. I grew up in Montgomery Village and went to Stedwick, Neelsville, and Watkins Mill High School. I went to college in College Park and made it a priority to come home as often as I can. This is the county I love yet I find it challenging that one day I will be able to find my own home here. Rents are rising at a ridiculous amount which make it difficult, if not impossible, for families to build a home here.

I support the HOME Act because it caps the rent at a manageable amount. Yes, a manageable amount. 3% is not radical. When I talk with my neighbors and fellow Montgomery County residents, they are asking for a rent cap much stronger than that not because they want to, but because they NEED it. Folks have to worry about groceries, schools, healthcare, childcare, books, utilities, mental health, and everything else in between. Under Bill 15-23, rents will double every 9 years. Will incomes double every 9 years for people? This bill codifies displacement and will most impact the Black and brown residents, like my family, that came to Montgomery County for another life.

I also ask the Councilmembers to think of the intersection of housing and various issues. If we do not have a 3% cap, renters will not be able to afford their rent. If they cannot afford their rent, they have to take that money from somewhere else. If they are a teacher, they will have to move out of the community they are building. If they are a student, they will have to sometimes skip classes for a second job or regain their sleep during the day. If they are a parent, they will have to work 3 jobs at a time, removing them from their children's lives. If they are most vulnerable and cannot find a job or avenue to pay for rent, they will resort to crime. All of these issues connect and often, they are rooted in the same injustice of housing insecurity. This rent cap is not just for the crises for the now, it is the future we want to create together.

When I close my eyes and think about the world I want to see in 50 years, I think of a world where people can go to school and learn without the stress of payment. I think of a world where no one has to work more than one job to have a steady income for their family. I think of a world where everyone's basic needs are met and they can focus their

valuable time on what matters most: the people they love. Rent stabilization is the building block for the world we want to see together. It is the foundation for what can be possible. The HOME Act will bring security and comfort for thousands of families and invite new development as well. Bill 15-23, with a whopping 8% + CPI, will lead to mass displacement and a Montgomery County I don't know if I can call home.

Thank you and as you make your decision, think of the world you want to see in 50 years.