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My name is Luqman and I'm testifying because I want rent stabilization for me and my family through the HOME Act.

I live at the Enclave and have negotiated rent increases for myself and my neighbors. I work with about 150 families who are refugees. They have just recently come to America and are living off of bare necessities. They get government benefits which are not flashy, but help us to survive. Rent stabilization is needed for us to live.

Many of these families got a big rent hike out of nowhere and they came to me to negotiate with the leasing office. We talk with the office for hours to help the family stay by finding an agreement. Usually, the rent increase starts at 7% to 8%, but the highest is upwards of 25%. This is too much for the families to handle. They have to take money from other needs, such as food, to pay for rent. How do we expect them to deal with these rent hikes?

Personally, I have a big family and it is challenging to hold everything together. I have four children who go to school and this has a huge impact on them not only because of the possibility of an eviction, but I also cannot give them enough food for their health. I was considering sending them to Afghanistan, but we cannot with the current situation there. Thankfully, I have a job but it is difficult to be stable. I am expecting a 7% - 25% increase this year and when that happens, I will not be able to live in this apartment anymore and don't know where we will go next. My apartment was originally \$1700 but similar ones are being sold for \$2000 and \$3000.

I am trying to plan ahead of this rent increase by working 60 hours a week and looking for a night job where I can make the cash that is needed. But, who knows if that is enough.

Emotionally, it is very difficult to handle. I do not know what the solution is.

Bill 15-23 would be completely useless. 3% in the HOME Act is fine. Not ideal and will survive, but we should go farther if we really cared about renters.

At the end of the day, we are refugees. We have a lot of problems and I do not understand why this is something else that is put on our plate. We need the government to help us. We need the HOME Act to bring rent stabilization to Montgomery County.

Thank you.