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

My name is Rafi Glazer. I am a resident of Aspen Hill in District 6. On behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ), I am submitting this testimony in support of the HOME Act, Bill 16-23, and in opposition to the 'Anti-Rent Gouging Bill,' Bill 15-23. JUFJ organizes over 2,000 Jews and allies from across Montgomery County, who act on our shared values to advance social and economic justice and racial equity in our local community. I'm testifying because I believe that all of our neighbors, across race, class, and zip code, deserve the chance to put down roots in our communities. I'm asking the County Council to pass rent stabilization with a cap no higher than 3% to ensure just that.

Fast approaching is the Jewish holiday of Passover, which celebrates the Israelites' escape from slavery. Our sacred texts insist that we turn this experience into compassion for the most vulnerable in our communities today; in fact, one of the most repeated commandments in all of Torah is to protect the widow, orphan, and stranger because we were once strangers. As a registered resource parent, or foster parent, I have opened my home to many of those most vulnerable, and it breaks my heart that some children would be with their biological families if unsustainably high annual rent increases had not placed their families into unstable housing.

In the three years that I have been a foster parent, I have had the privilege of caring for 10 children, from 3 days old to 16 years old. Many of them do not share their whole life stories, but when we drive around the county and a child points their finger at multiple houses and says, "I used to live there," it tells me that their families have not had stable housing. Another foster parent told me about a biological father who had to take a job in Pennsylvania because he could not afford rent in our county. As a result, he had to drive two hours each way just to see his children, which made it hard for him to make home visits. This in turn made reunification, a key goal of foster care, take much longer than it should have. He was kept away from his children because, for him and many others, rent is too high to live in this county.

Whereas the HOME Act would curb the county's housing crisis, the 'Anti-Rent Gouging Bill' would result in the displacement of our most vulnerable families. We need to do everything we can to make living in this wonderful county an option for everyone. I am doing my part as a foster parent to care for the children impacted by so many failures in our systems, including the crisis of housing instability. It is time for the Council to do your part to ensure no child is separated from their parents because of our county's inadequate protections for renters. **I urge the Council to support Bill 16-23 and oppose Bill 15-23.**