

Bessem Ndip  
Silver Spring, MD

Dear County Council Members,

My name is Bessem Ndip, and I am writing to express my support for the HOME Act. I am currently facing a big problem, as I have been informed that I have to leave my current home by April 18th, renew my lease at a 4% rent increase for 12 months, or be automatically placed on a month-to-month lease at an 8% rent increase. I am feeling very hopeless and angry, as finding a new affordable home in Montgomery County is proving to be extremely difficult.

I went to our social services office, and I was given a form to fill out for section 8 housing, but I have no idea how to fill it out. The front-desk person at the office told me that it would take at least 3 years to be approved for section 8 housing. This has made my blood pressure rise, as I am feeling very frustrated with the process. Being alone in this country is already difficult, but facing the possibility of homelessness is adding a great deal of stress to my life.

I have been searching for a second job, but it has been difficult. I work with disabled adults in a group-home and I used to have many hours, but they have hired more people to avoid paying full-time hours. Because I worked overnight shifts at minimum, there were some months I used to work without ever coming home to my own apartment. Now, with less hours, I am struggling to make enough to cover my rent and basic needs.

Even if I were to find a roommate, the cost of rent and utilities is becoming increasingly unaffordable. The rent is currently \$1,534 a month, and my rent will increase by 8% to \$1,657 next month because I am no longer able to afford a 12-month lease even at 4%. In the meantime, while I look for a new home, I must take the month-to-month option. This is making it increasingly difficult for me to make ends meet, as I am already having overdrafts in my bank account.

I pay all my money to rent. The other day I had to go to Kaiser for a doctor's appointment. And I had to pay the copay of \$40. But I did not even know if I paid the \$40 that I would have the money to pay for gas to get to Kaiser, because I had no money after just paying my monthly rent.

I am pleading with you to support and quicken passage of the HOME act and to consider a rent stabilization of 3% or lower. I believe that this would make a huge difference for people like me who are struggling to make ends meet. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Thank you,

Bessem Ndip