

Date of Public Hearing March 28, 2023

Carol Stern
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #16-23
THE HOME ACT

TO: Council President Glass, Vice President Friedson, and members of the County Council

FROM: Carol Stern

OPENING: My name is Carol Stern. I am a resident of Chevy Chase in District 1 and as a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill #16-23, The HOME ACT.

I want to personally thank Councilmembers Jawando and Mink for sponsoring this important legislation. Our Jewish tradition's primary concern regarding landlord-tenant relations is the question of permanence. Landlords are forbidden from evicting tenants without due warning and may not evict tenants during the winter months, when new housing will be hard to find. According to the great Jewish sage and philosopher, Moses Maimonides, a landlord must give the tenant sufficient notice before terminating a lease “so that the tenant can look for another place and will not be abandoned in the street”. The landlord, Maimonides suggests, will be held responsible if a tenant becomes homeless as the result of eviction. We must use this strong advice when reforming our laws. **All of this advice points us to the importance of The Home Act.**

As Councilmember Stewart so aptly said during the bill introduction discussion, a 10% rent increase is effectively an eviction. The Home Act's cap of 3% for any rent increase is a crucial element of this rent stabilization legislation. In addition, the Home Act includes single family homes and condominiums and includes a provision for funding affordable housing. When 60% of our MCEA members can't afford to live in the county where they teach along with other county employees, we are in a crisis. Passage of The Home Act can certainly help alleviate some of the stress on the housing system. .

As our rabbis taught us, giving permanent housing to our citizens and being responsible for homelessness after an eviction is of the utmost importance for any society. **Decent, safe, accessible, and affordable housing is a basic human right** and Jewish tradition recognizes the importance of the home for we are taught that the home is a *mikdash me'at*—a mini sanctuary, a sacred place.

I respectfully urge the Council Council to return a favorable report on The Home Act Bill 16-23.