

Diane Griffin
Silver Spring Maryland 20906

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Council,

My name is Diane Griffin and I am a resident of Westchester West apartments on Hewitt Avenue. I am writing to express my support for the HOME Act, particularly for the rent stabilization provision that limits rent increases to 3% or less. I am a 71 year old retiree who has been unable to work due to COVID-19, and I am struggling to make ends meet and pay my rent.

I currently pay \$1,300 per month in rent, and before the pandemic, my dad helped me pay for part of it. However, he fell and now needs his money for assisted living care, leaving me to pay the full amount. With only \$1,244 per month from Social Security, I am unable to pay my rent and other basic expenses. Despite my efforts to secure a part-time job over the phone, the job market is tight and limited due to my age and health conditions.

As a retiree on a fixed income of \$1,244 there is essentially no rent increase I can reasonably afford. Not 1%, 5%, or 10%. I need rent to be stabilized as low as possible. I'm not alone either. There are many seniors and people with disabilities in similar circumstances.

After getting behind on my rent for the first time during COVID-19 and facing potential eviction, I was forced to imagine what it would be like to lose my apartment and have to move. Depressingly, looking at the prices of other apartments in Montgomery County I fear that I would need to pay a much higher rent than I am now. It would be impossible for me to afford. The stability that the HOME Act would provide to my apartment and other units if I were to move is crucial for me.

I urge you to support the HOME Act and the rent stabilization provision that limits rent increases to 3% or less. This will provide stability for renters like me who are struggling to make ends meet, especially during these challenging times.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Diane Griffin