

Dear Council,

My name is Luz Castro. I am a proud Colombian CASA member and a single mother of three beautiful children. I am also a district 6 resident.

I recently received a 5% rent increase.

As a housecleaner who makes a modest living, I must work long hours and overtime to meet my basic needs. While a 5% rent increase may not seem that much to most, the impact that it has had on my economic and financial stability has been catastrophic.

I have a boy with special needs who needs to see a specialist weekly. To ensure we have a roof over our heads, I must shift funds around to ensure the rent gets paid on time. However, that comes with a cost, as it often takes away from food, clothes, utilities, and much-needed medical attention for myself and my son.

Unfortunately, with nowhere else to turn, those with the fewest options are left with the least opportunities. And for me, that may mean moving out of Montgomery County if rents are not reasonably capped.

I request your support of **Rent Stabilization Bill 16-23**: The Housing Opportunity, Mobility, and Equity Act in MoCo. Tenants need to know that if their rent increases, it will be by a reasonable amount. There is a reason why the community and over 25 organizations support it.

Firstly, it would provide renters economic stability, transparency, and predictability, helping them get the peace of mind they need to plan for other expenses and invest elsewhere in our economy.

Second, it would prevent involuntary displacement and homelessness by ensuring those most rent-burdened can retain their homes yearly.

And

Third, it would help to promote racial equity.

The HOME ACT strikes an ideal middle ground by helping to protect tenants from extreme rent hikes while also ensuring that landlords can still make reasonable increases in their Rent.

Just as landlords demand stability, predictability, and a reasonable rate of return, we, as renters, deserve the same.

Dignified housing, affordability, and above all else, stability.

Sincerely,

Luz Castro