

Mara Greengrass
Rockville

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

My name is Mara Greengrass and I'm a resident of District 6, where I live in the fabulous neighborhood of Randolph Hills. I'm testifying in support of the HOME Act, Bill 16-23, because I believe all of our neighbors need stable housing and predictable rent increases that won't force them to constantly move or even become homeless.

I'm asking the council to pass a rent stabilization bill that caps rents at 3%, because a huge percentage of Montgomery County is already rent-burdened. My husband and I were lucky to buy our home over 20 years ago at an affordable price, but we could never afford rent or a new mortgage here now. And as we send our daughter off to college in the fall, we know that unless things change, she'll never be able to rent a place to live in the county she grew up in.

Rents here are already too high and even a small increase will unhouse families that are living on the edge. When rents jumped after the voluntary rent guidelines expired, how many people accepted an increase and paid for it by stopping a needed medication? Or buying less healthy food? Or cramming more people into their home in order to cover rent? And how many people simply gave up and left the county, either to find jobs elsewhere or add long commutes to their days?

Montgomery County can and should do better than a bill that would allow increases of over 12% this year. For someone making a \$15 hourly wage and paying \$1,500-\$2,000 a month, that would require an extra 12-16 hours of work. I don't know about you, but I don't know how I would manage 12-16 more hours of work every month.

We have the opportunity to protect our most vulnerable populations with the HOME Act, which encourages housing development by exempting new construction from the rent cap for 10 years and keeps people in their homes right now. Stability and predictability will help landlords *and* tenants and it's the right thing to do. Please vote for the HOME Act.