



RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 19, 2023

Dear County Councilmembers,

The Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee was formed by the landmark Racial Equity and Social Justice Act to advise the Council, the Executive, and County agencies about racial equity and social justice in the County, and recommend policies, programs, legislation, or regulations necessary to reduce racial and social justice inequity.

The Committee strongly supports Bill 16-23, Landlord-Tenant Relations – Rent Stabilization (The HOME Act) and advises the Council to vote in favor of this legislation.

Unrestricted rent increases following the expiration of Bill 30-21, have exposed tenants to the risk of displacement. This risk is compounded by economic hardships resulting from COVID-19 impacts on income, health, and family obligations and further exacerbated by inflationary spikes in consumer prices – particularly for gas, food, and housing.

As equity practitioners, we center those most negatively impacted by the policy at hand, which in this case are rent burdened tenants. Additionally, households lacking access to affordable and safe housing are disproportionately BIPOC and were at risk for evictions and homelessness prior to the pandemic.

Black and Latinx renters experience acute housing insecurity:

- Among renter households in 2019, rent burden (expending 30 percent or more of income on rent) was experienced among 66 percent of Latinx renters and 60 percent of Black renters compared to 40 percent of White renters and 33 percent of Asian renters.¹
- Among COVID Relief Rental Program clients (approved as of April 4, 2021), 43 percent were Black and 37 percent were Latinx while 9 percent were White and 3 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander.²
- Among families experiencing homelessness in 2020, 78 percent were Black, 15 percent were White, 9 percent were Latinx, and 2 percent were Asian.³

¹ Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement for Expediated Bill 30-21

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/resjis/2021/Bill30-21RESJ.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

In addition to the data, we also reviewed the outpouring of community member stories and letters of support found in the [bill package](#), many of them written by rent burdened tenants.

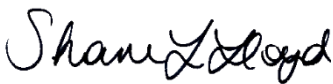
Also, according to the [Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement for bill 16-23](#):
“The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 16-23 will have a moderate to large positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. The proposed rent regulations would disproportionately benefit Black and Latinx tenants with improved housing affordability and stability. Further, the Bill systemically reinforces these benefits through establishing a permanent rent regulation program; creating new funding for affordable housing and the administration of the rent regulation program; and including provisions aimed at preventing tenant displacement.”

With unrestricted rent increases and fewer safeguards to shield our most marginalized communities from negative consequences of the housing market, the pandemic, and the rising costs of living, the Committee advises the County Council to intervene and practice its commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice by voting in favor of Bill 16-23.

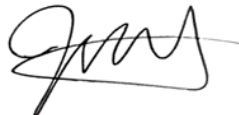
Thank you for your consideration. Our Committee remains available to support you in any manner.

Respectfully,

Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee



Shane Lloyd
Chair, RESJAC



Jared Hautamaki
Vice-Chair, RESJAC



Izola Shaw
Second Vice-Chair

cc: Marc Elrich, County Executive

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