

**Tracy Espinoza**



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE HOME ACT, BILL 16-23;  
AND IN OPPOSITION TO THE 'ANTI-RENT GOUGING' BILL 15-23**

Hi, my name is Tracy Espinoza, I live in Germantown in district 2 but study in Gaithersburg in district 7, and I am testifying because as a student of Montgomery County, I have seen the damage done towards students without safe and stable homes, such as what bill 15-23 supports.

I'm asking the Council to support the HOME Act that will not only give stable homes to renters and workers but also the youth.

Bill 15-23 not only affects renters but Montgomery County's own students: the generation that'll lead the future of this county. Growing up in Montgomery County, I was fortunate enough to live in a stable, safe home, but this isn't the case for everyone. Going to school, I didn't think about what might've been going on in my classmates' lives, but they too face difficulties, and constantly having to move from one city to another was one of them. A specific classmate of mine didn't have to move not 1 time, not 2, but 10 times, all because the rent's increase each month was unsustainable. Having only to rely on her working single mother and her baby sister, the built up consequences of not knowing whether or not there'll be a place to call home the next month slowly ate her alive. It not only made her sacrifice her social life, but her mental health too. She became less outgoing, forcing herself to isolate, and stopped trying to speak out. She no longer wanted to even try to make friends because there was always a reminder in the back of her mind telling her to not get attached because she *knows* she'll eventually have to move again and break all of those built bonds. Now, she lives in fear, wondering if this will remain constant enough for her baby sister to reach the age where she'll start developing the unsupportable lifestyle that is of a renter, but the HOME Act could change this.

It's absurd that as I write, I should be studying for exams, yet I am here, as a 14-year-old, fighting for my classmates' rights to stable housing because I can no longer stay on the side and watch them have to sacrifice everything they've worked for all because bills such as Bill 15-23 promote overwhelming rent increases. This is just one voice out of the countless voices in MCPS that deserve to be heard and that deserve a safe home. I don't ask for stable housing to be attainable in a couple of months or years, I ask for this right to be given now.