

## **In Opposition to Bill 18-23. - In Support of Funding OPC**

Dear Montgomery County Council Members,

My name is Ruben Meana Paneda and I am a Silver Spring resident. I strongly oppose Bill 18-23. This bill will replace the Office of the People's Counsel with a Community Zoning and Land Use Resource Officer. It will remove the requirement of that the Officer must be an attorney and will prohibit the Officer from serving as an advocate.

I support funding to restore the Office of People's Counsel, who serves to protect the public interest in land use and can participate and give testimony in any proceedings. Furthermore, a People's Counsel, as an attorney, will provide technical assistance to citizens for land use and zoning processes, and will promote equity and fairness. Its role is going to be critical to address the land use in the new developments under Thrive 2050. Thank you.

Ruben Meana Paneda