



**Testimony of Melissa Bondi, Policy Director,
Enterprise Community Partners Mid-Atlantic**

to the Montgomery County Council regarding:

Expedited Bill 38-23
Tenant Displacement – Right of First Refusal
to Buy Rental Housing – Amendments

Submitted Electronically
October 9, 2023

President Glass and Members of the Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on Bill 38-23. Enterprise Community Partners is a national nonprofit founded in Maryland that exists to make a good home possible for the millions of families without one. We support community development organizations on the ground, aggregate and invest capital for impact, advance housing policy at every level of government, and build and manage communities ourselves. Since 1982, we have invested more than \$220 million toward the creation or preservation of more than 3,600 homes in Montgomery County—all to make home and community places of pride, power and belonging.

We wish to express our support for the current proposed ordinance to amend the County's Right of First Refusal (ROFR) code chapter 53A as outlined in the staff report at introduction. These changes will allow municipalities as defined and other qualified entities meeting specific, reasonable criteria and meeting requirements outlined in the regulations.

By expanding the eligible partners who can support ROFR transactions across Montgomery County, the amendments will allow for greater public private partnerships, expanded capacity to respond to the needs of Montgomery residents for quality, committed housing affordability, and increased use of this important tool to help support anti-displacement and preservation efforts in the County.

We also support the 5% cap on deposit to help make fair-market transactions easier to assemble and pay within the short turnaround time required by ROFR execution. Alongside the additional benefits in helping the County to manage its own resources more effectively without reserving millions of dollars in such a short time period, the tool can be deployed more efficiently without loss to the property owner on value or sale.

Across the DC Metro region, we have seen the success of other ROFR programs in preserving housing affordability, increasing its quality, and importantly, doing so while mitigating the threat of resident displacement and loss of access to housing in their chosen locations. We believe these amendments will make the Montgomery County program even more effective in these same important areas of impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have; please contact me at MBondi@EnterpriseCommunity.org. On behalf of Enterprise Community Partners, we appreciate your consideration of our views.

CC: Rev. David Bowers, Vice President and Mid-Atlantic Market Leader