

Jo Shifrin_special appropriation for Bill # 15-23

November 7, 2023

Jo Shifrin

Bethesda, MD 20817

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 15-23

Funding DHCA for Rent Stabilization Implementation

To: Council President Glass, Vice President Friedson, and members of the County Council

From: Jo Shifrin

My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of Bethesda in District 1. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill # 15-23, Funding DHCA for Rent Stabilization Implementation.

First, I'd like to thank the Council for passing an historic bill last Spring that caps rental increases to no more than 6%. Now that a rent stabilization bill has been passed, it is imperative that the Council provide immediate funding for the implementation of rent stabilization. DHCA has requested a special appropriation of \$1,347,470 for the FY24 budget. This money is required so that DHCA can establish an Office of Rent Stabilization and hire the staff needed to create the information technology infrastructure, manage the reporting requirements, enforce compliance with the regulations, oversee the application and appeals process for landlords, and manage tenant complaints. The staff will develop an online website related to all rent stabilization matters and a portal through which landlords can report annual rent increase data. **Without this funding, the DHCA cannot implement the rent stabilization bill.**

Stable housing is a basic human right. It is a requirement for a healthy society and for reducing racial inequities. Montgomery County rents are already very high. Many of those who work in Montgomery County –like teachers, police, and other civil servants—cannot afford to live in the community where they work. Many of those who live in the County are cost-burdened by their rent. High rents inevitably lead to evictions, the destabilization of families, and increased health challenges for our residents. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Council to fund the request made by DHCA Director Scott Bruden.

We all want rent stabilization to be successfully implemented in a timely fashion.

Therefore, I urge the Council to approve Bill #15-23, Funding DHCA for Rent Stabilization Implementation.