

**Testimony in Support of Special Appropriation 24-14 to the FY24 Operating
Budget for the Department of Housing and Community Affairs,
Rent Stabilization Bill 15-23, \$1,374,470**

My name is Sara Mitchell. I am a human services and social justice student at George Washington University, and over the past year, I have had the privilege to be both a volunteer and an intern with Jews United for Justice's Montgomery County team. JUFJ represents over 2,000 Jews and allies from across Montgomery County, who act on shared Jewish values to work to advance social and economical justice and racial equality in our local community. **On behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ), I am submitting testimony in support of special appropriation 24-14 to fund the implementation of Bill 15-23.**

JUFJ and our housing partners, including CASA, Everyday Canvassing, and the MORE Network, have supported rent stabilization for over three years in following with the value of "*Ki shama elohim el kol ha'na'ar ba'asher hu sham*," or the value of listening to those most impacted by problems. I too have listened closely to impacted renters through my time working at JUFJ — through phone calls with tenants, through a deep dive into the policy details of rent stabilization tenants advocated for, and even through reading and tracking the over 150 testimonies submitted in support of capping the rent. Tenants were clear then, and continue to be clear now, that we urgently need rent stabilization not only in name but also in practice. The voices of our community that were heard then must be listened to now.

I attended every worksession for Bill 15-23, and am still struck by the care and thoughtfulness of DHCA Director Scott Bruton. He not only recommended important amendments to the County's rent stabilization bill, but also assured the Council that if given the opportunity, DHCA would put in the work to implement rent stabilization with the same care and thoughtfulness.

What do we need to meet these staffing requests from Director Bruton?

We need funding. And we need it quickly. As members of the rent stabilization coalition expected, **landlords are already taking advantage of the implementation timeline to increase rents at double-digit rates.** Our coalition partners organizing complexes from the

Blairs in Downtown Silver Spring to the Gateway Apartments in Gaithersburg have met with tenants facing double digit rent increases over the last month.

The Council must quickly pass the special appropriation of \$1,347,470 in full to ensure that rent stabilization is implemented successfully for all stakeholders in Montgomery County. If this appropriation is not met at the requested amount, DHCA will not be able to establish the necessary staffing and IT infrastructure, without which they cannot handle the additional reporting and enforcement that is crucial for a smooth implementation of rent stabilization. **We all want rent stabilization to be successful for landlords and tenants, and it is only through the swift passage of this funding that we can ensure this program meets our community's needs.**

We urge the Council to quickly approve the special appropriation to the FY24 budget for \$1,347,470 to establish the staffing and infrastructure needed to implement Bill 15-23.