

Testimony in favor of Special Appropriation #25-42 to the FY25 Operating Budget

Hearing Date: December 10, 2024

TO: Montgomery County Council

FROM: Steven Mondell Lewis

My name is Steven Mondell Lewis. I hope this letter finds you well. I am asking Montgomery County to allocate \$3.6 million additional dollars to emergency rental assistance and SHARP so that I will be able to gain housing. I have been experiencing homelessness for the last 12 months due to the unexpected loss of my younger brother Brandon. Luckily, I was fortunate enough to gain some sense of responsibility and stability at a young age (21) and I moved out of my parents' home and gained my own rental property that I shared with my brother. Back in 2019 I received a job with Hillcrest Children & Family Center, which is a social services agency centered around the homeless population in the District of Columbia. I enjoy helping people and being of service to my community. After my brother passed, all of the financial burden fell on me, and my income didn't allow me to remain in that unit. I was never officially evicted from my residence, but it was headed in that direction, so I chose to vacate the premises.

If myself or others in my community had access to this money through these housing programs, the money would not be wasted on anything materialistic or superficial. I honestly feel I am not the same person I was 12 months ago. I have feelings and thoughts I have never felt before. It makes me sad, but I find solace in understanding that if my brother was alive and kicking today, he would want me to persevere and elevate my life to the next level. I have seen how his passing and my housing instability have affected my family and the people that I hold near and dear to my heart and it sucks. I try my best to live my life in a positive manner but sometimes I think people are praying for my downfall due to the fact that I haven't had any forward movement.

I want to thank the Council and all of the Montgomery County officials who are responsible for providing this opportunity. I pray I have at least touched the heart of one person to move this forward. Thank you.

Best,

Steven M. Lewis.