

February 27, 2025

**Letter to the Montgomery County Council**

**Re: Bill 6-25 Consumer Protection – Defective Tenancies as Deceptive Trade Practices**

**The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) supports Bill 6-25 which would remove an exemption for landlord and tenant issues under county consumer protection laws**, making it easier for the county's Office of Consumer Protection and the Office of the County Attorney to enforce compliance when landlords fail to correct housing code violations. Under current county law, landlords are exempt from some consumer protection laws because they are not considered "merchants." This bill would change the "Landlord's" status to "Merchant" and enable government officials to hold landlords accountable if they provide unfit rental housing, do not provide amenities as advertised, fail to repair essential building services, impose junk fees or if they have committed chronic housing code violations.

Bill 6-25 is consistent with the LWVMC stated policy relating to housing and public accommodations. **The LWVMC supports affordable housing and strict enforcement of housing codes with civil penalties and any other measures to assure habitability.**

**The League's national policy supports the rights of tenants be protected for proper maintenance, management of facilities and services, and opposes limitations that undermine consumer protections.** The process should ensure every possible protection for complainant and persons or institutions against whom complaints are lodged. Avenues for legal redress should be widely publicized and easily accessible.

**Housing quality is essential for all families as well as achieving social justice of marginalized communities.** It is necessary for the economic and physical health of the county. Safe housing helps families and communities build their lives.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our views. We urge the Council to pass Bill 6-25.

Joan Siegel and Ralph Watkins  
Co-presidents