



Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony  
County Council Bill 6-25: Consumer Protection – Defective Tenancies as Deceptive Trade Practices  
March 4, 2025  
**SUPPORT**

The Montgomery County Community Action Board, the County’s local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, is in support of County Council Bill 6 – 25, which would allow renters to seek remedies for defective rental properties under consumer protection law.

As advocates for economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities, our board continues to support tenants’ rights and policies that remove barriers to safe and affordable housing. In Montgomery County, around 62% of renters earning less than \$50,000 annually spend over half of their income on housing, indicating a severe housing cost burden.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the lack of affordable housing options in the County, renters also face challenges addressing maintenance and facilities issues in their rental properties. In one example a board member shared, a County resident with two young children reported to her landlord that the refrigerator and stove stopped working in her apartment. When neither appliance was fixed, she decided to withhold her rent. She later had to pay back rent, even though the issues were never addressed. In the end, this resident had to vacate the property or face eviction. Bill 6 - 25 would offer another avenue for renters in similar, far too common situations to have these types of issues addressed.

Within our own Community Action Agency, for which our board is the governing body, staff report that it is common practice for landlords to simply let a lease expire if the tenant has expressed concerns about health and safety in the building, instead of addressing these issues directly. Marginalized members of our community, including undocumented residents, refugees, asylees, residents with disabilities, and families with modest incomes, are especially at risk for such unfair practices. This bill will offer another option for renters facing unsafe housing situations to have their concerns addressed.

It is important to note that protections for renters are especially critical in an area like Montgomery County where the cost of living is so high. According to the 2023 Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard, a household with two working adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child would need to earn \$122,943 annually to cover their basic necessities, over four times the federal poverty level.<sup>2</sup> Housing represents a significant expense for families. Policies that can lead to more housing stability, like Council Bill 6-25, can help families move towards the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

The Community Action Board strongly supports County Council Bill 6 – 25. We ask the Council to vote in favor of this bill and to continue to explore policies that will lead to more stable, safe, and affordable housing options for residents.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countystat/program-inventory/housing.html>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/MDMontCo2023\\_SSS.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/MDMontCo2023_SSS.pdf)