

Bill 5-25 Demolition Tax for Affordable Housing

To The Honorable County Council

Greetings

My name is Robert Stubblefield and I am a lifelong resident of Montgomery County. I am also a lay minister, an activist-organizer with a variety of groups such as the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition, Young People for Progress, Montgomery County Chapter of DSA and more but I am responding in my individual capacity to write in favor of Bill 5-25, Demolition Tax For Affordable Housing Production. My reasons are detailed below.

The first reason why I am writing in support is that county is in a housing crisis. Currently, people of Montgomery County are trying to either become homeowners instead of renters, rent an affordable apartment unit and yet the production is not keeping up with demand. In addition, the county is feeling the affects of the state budget and the crisis going on at the federal level. Due to all of these situations, it is vital that the county able to fund affordable housing initiatives. The way the bill is set up, it is an excise tax similar to what other jurisdictions have in which demolitions both total and partial will be \$20,000 with the rate increased based on CPI. In addition, the bill exempts from the tax homes that are deemed unsafe, covenants for a period of five years, replacement single home is necessary for medical/disability reasons. This is a good thing. In addition, the revenues raised from this tax will be dedicated to the Housing Production Fund which

The second reason why I'm supporting this bill is because of the racial equity. Racial equity in housing is vital because not only is homeownership and paying affordable prices for rental units a way for Black and Hispanic communities to build up wealth, The Office of Legislative Oversight, which has been vital in their analysis of Racial equity impacts, stated that potential positive impacts that this bill has provided that residents of the revitalized neighborhoods benefit of employment opportunities and keep cultural institutions viable, having tenant protections and rental regulations etc. In other words, having a comprehensive plan in addition to this tax will have a positive impact. It is vital that with this legislation that we keep our racial equity focus.

In closing, I support this bill. This bill is part of building a county that is truly progressive in words and in deeds. It is part of building a mosaic that we can all be proud of to call home, to have communities that people can build and thrive. Thank you

Robert Stubblefield