
Nhi Truong

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My name is Nhi Truong, and I live in Olney, MD. I am currently an intern with the MoCo Green New Deal, an organization that advocates for both environmental sustainability and social justice within Montgomery County. I am also a student at Sherwood High School, where I am passionate about working on issues that affect my community. I identify as Asian, and it's part of what we always say: that we must take care of one another, especially in the creation of a more equitable and sustainable space for all.

I want to share with you the story of my aunt, who battled the rising housing prices in Montgomery County. My aunt and two children lived a few years ago in an older house in the county. My aunt, a single mom, worked multiple jobs so that she could provide for her two children, but as the rent increased and there were no houses they could afford, she started missing payments. Then, the landlord raised the rent higher than she could afford, and my aunt and children were forced out. There were no other choices but to take a smaller apartment further away from my aunt's workplace and the schools the children attended. That meant more commuting time, more stress, and a greater cost. Despite all efforts, my aunt struggled with budgeting for the move, including the transport cost, deposits, and acquiring a property that would accommodate their situation. She could not qualify for rent support, and as the flat they moved into had a horrible state, they were forced to expend more money on fixing things such as heat and pipes. This strained my aunt's budget considerably, and the disruption affected the children's performance at school and mental well-being. They were always on edge, and the uncertainty over their accommodation issues made all the other issues harder. Unaffordable housing in Montgomery County forces families into a decision: paying rent or being in a position to provide for other necessities, such as eating or being able to get around.

That is why I am writing today to urge Montgomery County to invest \$150,000 in retrofitting homes through organizations such as Rebuilding Together. Retrofits can make housing more affordable by cutting bills, making homes safer, and making living conditions better. If my aunt had been able to receive this kind of assistance, it might have been enough to keep her in the house longer, or at least would have placed her in a safer, more affordable home without the expense of paying for repairs or higher bills. For families such as mine, retrofitting is a way to more security and stability, to not be driven by the cycle of displacement but rather to have a chance to rebuild a normal life with the absence of fear of being evicted or higher rental rates. Montgomery County would be investing in the families who are doing all they can just to make it through each day with their heads above water by investing in retrofitting programs. That investment would enable people to stay in their homes, create more livable living conditions, and provide them with the stability they need in order to achieve success.

Thank you again for your consideration. I believe that investing in the retrofitting and affordable housing projects would enable Montgomery County to make a real contribution to so many families' lives and enable a future in which all will have the opportunity to live in a stable, secure, and affordable dwelling.

Sincerely,

Nhi Truong