

Dear Council President Stewart and Councilmembers:

My name is Manone Djeukam, and I am a Junior at Wheaton High School, living in District 5. I'm also an intern with BIPOC Moco New Green Deal, where I've had the chance to work with various groups of other incredible student advocates who are passionate about addressing issues like climate change, racism, poverty, among other humanitarian crises. These issues are close to my heart because they affect so many of my neighbors and friends in Montgomery County.

In the fall, through my internship, I spent some time canvassing in Montgomery County, speaking with residents, and I witnessed firsthand the struggles that many people face when it comes to housing. I saw families who were facing eviction or had already been evicted, and I was shocked by how much they were losing—not just their homes, but their personal belongings as well. It made it incredibly clear that there needs to be more attention and support for families during the transition from homelessness to stable housing, especially when people are at their most vulnerable state.

One thing that stood out to me during my time canvassing is the need for secure storage options after eviction. When families are evicted, they often have nowhere to put their belongings. Many end up losing everything they have including both sentimental and essential items, which makes it even harder to recover and rebuild. That's why I am asking the Council to fund **Storage and Moving Assistance** in the FY2026 Budget. Specifically, I urge the Council to secure storage for personal belongings after eviction, providing a minimum time frame of 3-6 months, extendable depending on individual circumstances.

Having a safe place to store personal belongings during such a stressful time would make a huge difference. For families already facing the trauma of losing their home and stability, this kind of support from the people meant to represent and support them would give them a chance to focus on getting back on their feet as well as making incredible strides forward, instead of worrying about losing all of their possessions. I've seen how difficult it is for families to start over without the things that are often tied to their memories, their sense of identity, and their dignity. By providing storage, we are giving them a lifeline and the opportunity to rebuild their lives in an appropriate time frame, as well as in a way that's not as overwhelming.

Without this kind of support, families can fall even further into a crisis which does nothing but build onto the increasing issue of poverty among Montgomery County Residents.. They can't focus on finding a new home if they're dealing with the added burden of losing everything, or the majority, of what they own. That's why I believe it's essential that the Council funds this program, to ensure that no family is left behind during such a difficult time.

Thank you for your time and for considering my request. I hope the Council will support **Storage and Moving Assistance**, as it is a critical step in helping families who have been evicted to recover and rebuild.

Respectfully,
Manone Djeukam