



RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July --, 2022

Dear County Council,

The Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee was formed by the landmark Racial Equity and Social Justice Act to advise the Council, the Executive, and County agencies about racial equity and social justice in the County, and recommend policies, programs, legislation, or regulations necessary to reduce racial and social justice inequity.

The Committee strongly supports Bill 22-22– Landlord-Tenant Relations Limitations on Rent Increases and advises the Council to urgently vote in favor of this emergency legislation.

Since the expiration of the previous Bill 30-21- Landlord-Tenant Relations - Restrictions During Emergencies- Extended Limitations Against Rent Increases and Late Fees on May 15, 2022, which provided county renters with temporary protections from rent increases, County renters face an increased risk of displacement. This risk is compounded by economic hardships resulting from COVID-19 impacts on income, health, and family obligations and further exacerbated by inflationary spikes in consumer prices – particularly for gas, food, and housing.

According to the Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement for the previous Bill 30-21: “Low-wealth and low-income households have been negatively impacted by the financial burdens associated with the pandemic. These households lacking access to affordable and safe housing, also known as secure housing, are also at greater risk of experiencing eviction and homelessness. Many of these households who are disproportionately Black, and Latinx in Montgomery County were at risk for evictions and homelessness before the pandemic.”

Black and Latinx renters experience acute housing insecurity:

- Among renter households in 2019, rent burden (expending 30 percent or more of income on rent) was experienced among 66 percent of Latinx renters and 60 percent of Black renters compared to 40 percent of White renters and 33 percent of Asian renters.¹
- Among COVID Relief Rental Program clients (approved as of April 4, 2021), 43 percent were Black, 37 percent were Latinx while 9 percent were White, and 3 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander.²

¹ Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement for Expediated Bill 30-21
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/resjis/2021/Bill30-21RESJ.pdf>

² Ibid.

- Among families experiencing homelessness in 2020, 78 percent were Black, 15 percent were White, 9 percent were Latinx, and 2 percent were Asian.³

In addition to the data, the Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee members have considered multiple stories and lived experiences shared by County renters facing challenges of housing affordability and insecurity.

With unrestricted rent increases and fewer safeguards to shield our most marginalized communities from the negative consequences of the housing market, the pandemic, and the rising costs of living; the Committee advises the County Council to urgently intervene and practice its commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice by voting in favor of Bill 22-22.

Thank you for your consideration. Our committee remains available to support you in any manner.

Respectfully,

Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee

Izola Shaw
Chair, RESJAC Committee

Shane Lloyd
Vice-Chair RESJAC Committee

cc: Marc Elrich, County Executive

³ Ibid.