

To: City of Rockville Council

From: Linda Plummer, President Montgomery County Branch of the NAACP

Re: Rent Stabilization

On behalf of the Montgomery County Branch of the NAACP, I write to express our support for the enactment of rent stabilization measures for rental housing in the City of Rockville.

We support the enactment of such measures because predictable rents not only benefit renters but also benefit all members of the community because such measures provide stability in the lives of tenants and reduce residential displacement and dislocation. The cost of displacement and dislocation is a societal cost which adversely affects all of us but most heavily weighs upon Black and Brown residents.

As noted in the Office of Legislative Oversight's Social Justice and Racial Equity Impact Statement (OLO SJREI) which accompanied Council Bill 16-23, " there is strong evidence that rent regulations are effective in supporting housing affordability and stability for tenants in regulated units. Studies have overwhelmingly found that tenants in regulated units stay in their homes for longer than tenants in non-regulated units. Further, several studies have found that rent regulations disproportionately benefit BIPOC tenants. "

Moreover, OLO SJREI noted that "housing stability has proven benefits across multiple facets of wellbeing, including physical, mental and emotional health, and educational achievement among children."

Additionally, we note that while 35% of Montgomery County residents are renters, there are racial disparities in the make-up of the rental population with non-White people comprising over 70% of those who rent¹.

And while we strongly urge the County and each Municipality to seek long-term housing solutions that provide residents with housing ownership opportunities, we recognize that rental housing is a vital component of the housing market. Therefore, we urge consideration of a rental stabilization measure that would ensure that rental housing is affordable, safe, decent, and is available on a non-discriminatory basis. We believe that at a minimum, such a measure would include provisions that would:

- 1) Establish an annual maximum rent increase for rental housing,

¹ See Overview of Rental Housing in Montgomery County, Maryland, Montgomery Planning. 2023.

- 2) Provide exemptions for certain buildings from rent stabilization requirements, including newly constructed units,
- 3) Permit a landlord to submit a petition for a rent increase to obtain a fair return, and
- 4) Limit rent increases for vacant units.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our views with you and look forward to working with you on this important legislation.