

**Stable Homes Coalition Support for House Bill 821
Montgomery County Stable Homes Act (MC 12-20)
March 10, 2020**

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and the thousands of Montgomery County residents we collectively represent, we urge you to support **House Bill 821 Montgomery County Stable Homes Act (MC 12-20)**. This legislation promotes stable housing for children, families and residents by requiring a landlord to state a justifiable reason before displacing residents in our community. The Montgomery County Delegation voted overwhelmingly in favor of this legislation in 2019 and 2020, and we urge your support in the House Environment and Transportation Committee to pass HB 821 this year.

As a county, we value our diversity and strive for equality and fairness. However, around 40 percent of our population -- renters, including families and children -- are at risk of being involuntarily displaced with just 60 days notice from the landlord. Our current system creates an imbalance of power where renters can be discriminated against or fear retaliation by their landlord when reporting unsafe conditions or requesting necessary repairs. Housing is a universal necessity. Without stable and secure housing, every other facet of life is thrown into turmoil. It is time that we affirm housing as a human right by achieving full passage of the Montgomery County Stable Homes Act.

This bill is a critical step in protecting our residents and vulnerable neighbors from displacement, including people with disabilities, immigrants, families with children, and low income individuals. HB 821 requires a landlord to provide a justifiable reason before displacing a resident. Reasons outlined include substantial breach of lease, habitual non-payment of rent, damage to property, disorderly conduct, illegal activity on the premises, or if the landlord seeks to recover the property/remove the rental from the market for certain purposes.

HB 821 gives tenants in Montgomery County a basic level of home security by helping to protect them from retaliation and discrimination, and by assuring them they should not have to choose between reporting a dangerous violation to a landlord and staying in their homes.

As a county, we should do everything we can to keep people in their homes, so they can continue to live in and contribute to the community. For these reasons, we urge your favorable vote for **House Bill 821**.

Sincerely,

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich
Mayor Kate Stewart and Takoma Park City Council

ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS:

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland
CASA de Maryland
Disability Rights Maryland

Essex House Apartments Tenant Association
Hampshire Towers Apartments Tenant Association
Jews United For Justice
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Montgomery County
Montgomery County Association of Black Democrats
Montgomery County Commission on Aging
Montgomery County Renters Alliance
Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)
Montgomery County Young Democrats
Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland
Public Justice Center
The Charter House Residents Council
UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO

INDIVIDUALS:

Dylan Shelton, Renter
Elissa Laitin, Renter
John Appiah-Duffell, Landlord
Karyn Onyeneho, Renter
Scott Schneider, Renter
Victoria Price, Renter