

NATALI FANI-GONZÁLEZ
COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 6

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Rockville, MD 20850

CHAIR
Economic Development Committee (ECON)

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Planning, Housing and Parks Committee (PH)



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

FAVORABLE
Senate Bill 0203
Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act of 2024
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

January 25, 2024

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Natali Fani-González, and I am a Councilmember in Montgomery County. I am here to speak **in support with amendments of SB 0203: Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act of 2024.**

I represent a very diverse district in Montgomery County in terms of socio-economics. It includes my hometown in Wheaton and the areas of Glenmont and Forest Glen. My district has the highest percentage of Latinos in the entire County and, in my view, the best ethnic-restaurants in the entire DC region! Although Montgomery County is known for being a wealthy county, it has deep pockets of poverty located in my district, and particularly in places like Glenmont and Wheaton where I live with my family. The fact that my district has three metro stations makes it pretty significant, yet the lack of attainable housing around these metro stations is a huge problem for my community. A range of housing types priced for a range of incomes is essential to integration and equity, and Montgomery County's current housing supply simply does not meet the needs of current or future households. We need more housing and also more strategic ways of funding it like what we have done in Montgomery County with our Housing Production Fund. But the need is so huge that we cannot do this by ourselves. We need the State to look into a similar model of fiscal creativity to get us more housing, particularly near transit in low-income communities with the goal of uplifting and creating opportunities for all. That's why I wholeheartedly support the Housing Innovation Pilot

Program Act, with amendments by the Sponsors using the expertise of the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission.

I am tracking this bill very closely, because my District desperately needs support. In Glenmont, for example, this proposed Housing Innovation pilot program would help us increase our housing supply, including income-restricted affordable housing, by the Glenmont metro station, which would lead to improving access to services, amenities, and infrastructure for low- and moderate-income residents who are disproportionately people of color. What's also key about Glenmont, the metro station we have there, has one of the lowest ridership of all WMATA's end-of-the-line stations, including those in Virginia. There has been no significant private redevelopment in Glenmont for decades. Sure, we have built a few townhomes in the last few years, but nothing on a large scale by this metro station to increase housing affordability and metro-ridership. The Housing Innovation Pilot Program Act of 2024 will help us get another funding stream to create more affordable housing by this metro station.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Natali Fani-González
Councilmember, District 6
Chair, Economic Development Committee