



April 1, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
2 West Miller Senate office Building S
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Testimony of Victoria Leonard, Chair, Committee for Montgomery on
HB 964: Montgomery County - Task Force on the Displacement of Residents of Emory Grove MC 5-25
Position: FAVORABLE**

Thank you Chair Feldman and members of the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 964. My name is Victoria Leonard, and I am the 2024/25 Chair of the Committee for Montgomery. The Committee for Montgomery (CfM) is a cross-section of Montgomery County business, labor, education, civic, arts, and community-based organizations. Our mission is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to Montgomery County and the State.

CfM supports HB 964. The bill creates a task force to study how urban renewal from 1960 to 1985 caused displacement of Emory Grove residents and make recommendations on potential remedies. The task force would be required to submit an interim report by December 15, 2025, and complete its findings and recommendations in a final report by December 15, 2026. Montgomery County supports the bill.

Originally founded by freed African Americans in 1864, Emory Grove at its peak had nearly 500 residents living on 300 acres of land in the northeast quadrant of Montgomery County. This vibrant and close-knit community was decimated by urbanization. While we cannot undo what happened to this historic African American community, understanding the impact of “urban renewal” on Emory Grove is consistent with our county’s commitment to restorative justice.

CfM urges a favorable report on HB 1228.

Sincerely,

Victoria Leonard,
2024/25 Committee for Montgomery Chair