



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 964

DATE: April 1, 2025

SPONSOR: Montgomery County Delegation

ASSIGNED TO: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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POSITION: SUPPORT

Montgomery County – Task Force on the Displacement of Residents of Emory Grove MC 5-25

House Bill 964 would create a Task Force on the Displacement of Residents of Emory Grove to study how urban renewal from 1960 to 1985 caused displacement of Emory Grove residents and to make recommendations on potential remedies (including methods for determining eligibility and providing compensation) for former landowners and incentives for construction projects. The Task Force would include the Director of the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights, the Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board, the Executive Director of Montgomery County's Housing Opportunities Commission, as well as one appointee each by the County Executive and Council with professional experience in housing discrimination issues. 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.

Emory Grove was originally founded by freed African Americans in 1864. At its peak, it had a population of nearly 500 residents living on 300 acres of land in the northeast quadrant of Montgomery County. Despite it being a vibrant and close-knit community, Emory Grove's residents were significantly impacted by debilitating pressures of urbanization over a 25-year period that resulted in a loss of affordable housing and a diminished sense of cultural identity and heritage.

House Bill 964 cannot turn back the clock on what happened to this historic African American community. However, it provides an important step forward in Montgomery County's commitment to restorative justice for the residents of Emory Grove.

To that end, Montgomery County urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report on House Bill 964.