

# **Del Charlotte Crutchfield Testimony for HB 964 Mon**

Uploaded by: Charlotte Crutchfield

Position: FAV

CHARLOTTE A. CRUTCHFIELD, ESQ.  
*Legislative District 19*  
Montgomery County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

*Subcommittees*

Chair, Family and Juvenile Law

Public Safety



The Maryland House of Delegates  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

April 1, 2025

The Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: HB 964 Montgomery County-Task Force on the Displacement of Residents of Emory Grove  
MC 5-25**

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and Committee:

This legislation is necessary to understand the urban renewal policies and procedures pursued by Montgomery County, Maryland from late 1960 until 1985 that affected a historically African American community, Emory Grove, within Montgomery County.

Emory Grove was founded shortly after the civil war, when several freedmen from local farms purchased property which was considered rocky and unusable for farming. The community was a self-contained community anchored by the Emory Grove United Methodist Church, a business district and a recreation park with the only lighted baseball field in Montgomery County (Johnson's Park). The community thrived for over 100 years.

The passage of the Housing Act of 1949 spurred the start of rehabilitation projects in urban and suburban communities nationwide. Even though the Act was aimed to clear areas of "blight" or "slums" to make way for modern development. Unfortunately, it disproportionately targeted African American communities and lead to permanent displacement and harm to African American families.

Efforts around the use of urban renewal were sparked in the 1960's after the Montgomery County Council passed an ordinance requiring all homes to have piped in water and sewage lines.

At the time, most living conditions in Emory Grove were substandard with:

- Few homes had running water.

- Almost no homes had sewer facilities
- Some residents lived in crowded shacks without electricity.
- Roads were poorly constructed.

Blaming the living conditions and the costs associated to build water and sewer facilities, both Montgomery County and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission refused to intervene to construct the water and sewer facilities within the community. The cost was estimated to be over \$ 1 million.

As a result, Montgomery County designated Emory Grove as the first area in the county to be developed under the urban rehabilitation program (Emory Grove Urban Renewal Project).

Expectations for the urban renewal project were as follows:

- Financing available to enable all landowners to continue living in their homes with the promise that no one would have to move until a replacement home was completed.
- 300 new single-family homes (detached) and 325 townhomes available for rent and sale. (Time schedule-May 1969 under construction, 1970 estimated completion).

The Emory Grove Urban Renewal Project ran eight (8) years behind schedule, with the first phase completed in 1978. Condemnation actions on homes in Emory Grove were completed by the late 1970's. By 1983, only 17 of the original 126 families remained.

This is an unfortunate story about a community where promises were made and broken.

**For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request a favorable report for HB 964.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlotte Crutchfield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Delegate Charlotte Crutchfield

# **UPDATED SENATE HB 0964 Emory Grove Task Force\_posi**

Uploaded by: Jordan BaucumColbert

Position: FAV



## **POSITION STATEMENT**

**Bill:** HB 0964 Montgomery County – Task Force on the Displacement of Residents of Emory Grove (5-25)

**Position:** SUPPORT

**Date:** April 1, 2025

**Contact:** Debra Borden, General Counsel

Jordan Baucum Colbert, Government Affairs Liaison

Dear Chair Brian Feldman,

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“M-NCPPC” or the “Commission”) has voted to support this bill with amendments to include the Planning Board Chair or his designee as a member of the taskforce. The current version of this bill reflects those amendments.

**What this Bill Does.** Establishes a Task Force on the displacement of residents of Emory Grove to study how urban renewal caused the displacement of residents from the Emory Grove community and make recommendations on potential remedies for those who were displaced by urban renewal; and generally relating to the Task Force on the Displacement of Residents of Emory Grove.

**Dedication to dismantling systemic racism.** The Commission is committed to the goals of this Bill. Montgomery Planning’s [Equity Agenda for Planning](#) is an ongoing commitment to systemically dismantle the institutional and structural racism that exists in and has long influenced planning and zoning processes and to prevent that influence in the future. We are committed to confronting the legacy of racism and its ongoing effects and to using this equity lens in all our plans, policies, practices, and other work—including to ensure that staff understand and practice social justice in their hiring practices and work to dismantle their own internalized biases. To that end, we are supportive of Delegate Crutchfield’s intent with this Bill. The taskforce will afford Montgomery Planning the opportunity to provide historical land use expertise, equity considerations and data analysis.

For these reasons, the Commission requests a favorable vote on HB 0964.

**HB 964 - MoCo\_Morningstar\_FAV (GA 25) (Senate).pdf**

Uploaded by: Sara Morningstar

Position: FAV



# 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**

**CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

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### **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.

# **HB 964 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tim Warner

Position: FAV



## **Rev. Timothy B. Warner's HB 964 Testimony**

Good afternoon, my name is Rev. Tim Warner, and I have proudly served the Emory Grove UMC as its Sr. Pastor for the last 12 years. I'm pleased to speak on behalf of our entire church in enthusiastic support of HB 964. I do so because of the lasting impact the trauma of urban renewal had, not only on the town, but on the people who lived there, multiple generations of their offspring, and even on the new Americans who have now come from every corner of the globe to call Emory Grove home.

After spending years doing the delicate work of relationship-building after I arrived at the church 11 years ago, I held a visioning retreat with leaders where we struck at the core of what I describe as a malaise that had fallen over the congregation that had caused it to have fallen into disrepair, organizational strife and steadily declining membership. The people of the church, substantially comprised by up to 5 generations of the founding families of the town, were mourning the destruction of the community their forbears who were former slaves had built, lived in and thrived in, caused by urban renewal.

In their narrative, they had been told by the government that the houses they owned were substandard, and that if they sold their land to the government, the government would construct better houses that they would be able to purchase. Homeowners sold their homes and land for pennies on the dollar to the government, and instead of houses that they could afford to buy, they were priced out of purchasing the homes that were eventually built, and received instead lots of Section 8 multi-family dwellings they could rent, and what was then a new recreation center and a pool. The physical community they had built, largely with their own hands, the businesses they had created against all odds, and the life they had created and lived together were all destroyed, and for generations now the community has been left to live out a traumatic narrative caused by intentional concentration of poverty where a functional and culturally-rich community used to be.

To be clear, there was first the trauma of slavery, then Montgomery County's version of Jim Crow, then urban renewal, followed by life in concentrated

poverty created by the government. This has been a repeated pattern of trauma across generations of people, and the result had been the slow death of the only remaining community institution, the church.

Dr. Joy Degruy, in her ***Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing*** characterizes what the church was experiencing well. She writes, "Multi-generational trauma together with continued oppression and absence of opportunity to experience the benefits available in the society lead to Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome... I have identified three categories [of behavior]: vacant esteem, ever-present anger, racist socialization... Vacant Esteem is the state of believing oneself to have little or no worth, exacerbated by similar pronouncements of inferiority from the personal sphere AND the larger society. Vacant esteem is the net result of three spheres of influence – society community and family... At the community level groups of people establish agreed-upon beliefs about their members' worth, beliefs that are reflected in the community's standards and values regarding acceptable behavior, educational attainment and professional possibilities. These standards and values translate into what achievements are believed to be practical and feasible for it's members. Problems can arrive when these standards and values promote counterproductive behaviors or inaccurately limit people from access to what is truly attainable."

At that same retreat, we formed a vision to rebuild a community on land that we owned or would attain, to restore families offering an opportunity to build generational wealth through homeownership and to welcome our new neighbors to a new community that had the ethic of the old one. We have spent the balance of that time purchasing land and forming the Heritage Emory Grove Community Development Corporation, which is a leading partner in redeveloping the town. The Heritage Emory Grove development project will eventually feature more than 550 units of housing across the full range of affordability. We are working with every branch of our state and local government to accomplish this, as well as non-profit partners.

The question remains, however, particularly as we are but one of more than 40 foundational communities in Montgomery County that have been negatively changed forever by government action, what really happened during the period of urban renewal? Who benefited, and who did not, and why? We applaud Delegate Crutchfield for seeking answers to those questions through HB964, and for asking all of us as a community, what can we do to fix this horrendous problem?

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# **HB 964 Before Senate EEE Victoria Leonard Committ**

Uploaded by: Victoria Leonard

Position: FAV





committee for  
**MONTGOMERY**

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