



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

House Bill 0821: Montgomery County Stable Homes Act MC 12-20
March 10, 2020
SUPPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2020 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with more than 600 politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0821. Displacement of residents has a devastating impact on residents and reverberates throughout the community. It can lead to homelessness, job loss, income insecurity, food insecurity, increased student transiency and increased mental health crises. The repercussions are not easily remedied by the County, as there are already 30,000 people -- in large part women age 62+ and single mothers -- on the affordable housing waiting list in Montgomery County.

Displacement of families cannot be allowed to occur in a haphazard, unjust and inequitable fashion. Such actions would disproportionately affect residents impacted by poverty. Out of 10.3 million renter households with an income below the poverty line, 71% are severely cost-burdened, spending more than half their income on housing. This cost burden is detrimental for low-income families who struggle to cover basic needs, such as food, healthcare, transportation, and childcare and who often must make untenable financial decisions.

WDC's advocacy work focuses on legislation disproportionately affecting women and children. Research shows that low-income women, especially women of color are at higher risks of being displaced. Nationally, 8% of Latina women and 20% of black women are displaced each year primarily because their circumstances involve households with children, lower wages, domestic violence and gender dynamics between male landlords and female tenants. These systemic factors often result in a higher percentage of women being subjected to actions that result in displacement.

WDC advocates for the protection of the rights of all tenants. Vulnerable women and children dealing with poverty should not count housing displacement among their worries. It is incumbent upon the state of Maryland to protect the most vulnerable among us.

We ask for your support for HB0821 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President



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