COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Jawando
Co-Sponsors: Council President Katz, Councilmember Rice, and Councilmember Navarro

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

1. prohibit the increase of rent above rent guidelines during and after a certain declared emergency;
2. prohibit certain notices to tenants;
3. require certain notices to tenants; and
4. generally amend County law concerning landlord-tenant relations.

By adding
Montgomery County Code
Chapter 29, Landlord-Tenant Relations
Section 29-55

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:
Sec. 1. Section 29-55 is added as follows:

29-55. Rent increases during [[states]] state of emergency – prohibited.

(a) Definitions. In this Section, [[emergency]] the following terms have the meanings indicated.

Emergency means the catastrophic health emergency declared by the Governor of Maryland on March 5, 2020, as amended or extended by the Governor, under Section 14-3A-02 of the Public Safety Article of the Maryland Code.

Tenant has the meaning stated in Section 29-1. Tenant includes an existing tenant. Tenant does not include a prospective tenant.

(b) Rent increases above guidelines – when prohibited. A landlord must not increase a tenant’s rent to an amount that exceeds the voluntary rent guidelines under Section 29-53 if:

(1) the rent increase would take effect during an emergency; or

(2) notice of the rent increase does not comply with subsection (c) and Section 29-54.

(c) Notices of rent adjustments.

(1) During an emergency and within [[30]] 90 days after the expiration of an emergency, a landlord must not notify a tenant of a rent increase if the increase would exceed the voluntary rent guidelines under Section 29-53.

(2) [[A landlord must inform a tenant in writing to disregard any notice of a rent increase if]] If a landlord provided notice of a rent increase to a tenant prior to the emergency and the increase would exceed the voluntary rent guidelines under Section 29-53, the landlord must inform the tenant in writing:
(A) [[the landlord provided the notice to the tenant prior to an emergency; and]] to disregard the notice; or

(B) [[the effective date of the increase would occur on or after the date the emergency began]] that the increase is amended to be less than or equal to the voluntary rent guidelines under Section 29-53.

(d) Notice of expiration of emergency. The Department must post on its website information about the requirements of this Section, including the date that an emergency expires, and the date that is [[30]] 90 days after the expiration of the emergency.

Sec. 2. Expedited Effective Date. The Council declares that this legislation is necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on the date on which it becomes law.

Sec. 3. Sunset date. This Act must expire, and must have no further force or effect, upon the [[121st]] 181st day following the expiration of the catastrophic health emergency declared by the Governor of Maryland on March 5, 2020, as amended or extended by the Governor.

Sec. 4. Short title. This Act may be cited as the “COVID-19 Renter Relief Act”.
Approved:

[Signature]

Sidney Katz, President, County Council

Date: 4/23/20

Approved:

[Signature]

Marc Elrich, County Executive

Date: 4/24/20

This is a correct copy of Council action.

[Signature]

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq., Clerk of the Council

Date: 4/27/20