

Dear Council Members,

I have been working as a Landlord Tenant Property Manager in Montgomery County for 8 years, but in the industry for 23 years. My experience with the Landlord Tenant Laws have been positive and I feel that I have always complied with the laws as they are written, no matter how reasonable or unreasonable.

It is my opinion more often than not, the Council has passed laws as a knee jerk reaction to a few reckless landlords when the majority of landlords in Montgomery County act responsibly and fair. I believe this is the case with COVID-19 and the knee jerk measures that are being taken in the proposed bill. Here are my concerns:

- The national and local state of emergency that exists could possibly go on for a few years as the country recovers and jurisdictions fight for funding, which means landlords are subject to no reasonable end date. Our local economy tends to recover faster than Baltimore and National levels. Any restrictions on rent increases should only be up to a year. A review after a year is reasonable.
- Landlords are facing more expenses as a result of COVID-19 and you are asking landlords them to continue to foot the bill as if all landlords have deep pockets. Some of the properties that are owned are owned by pension plans and individuals that were relying on this as income for retirement and/or their livelihood. If you are going to propose a freeze on increases, you should consider lowering county taxes so that properties can maintain their operation standards without being asked to go into a deficit.
- If properties cannot operate and pay the mortgage due to reduced or no increases while expenses are increasing, the result will be layoffs of leasing employees and more use of technology to lease apartments. Something will be sacrificed because landlords must pay their bills too.
- Prior to the bill proposal many of the large landlords in Montgomery County had already amended their renewals from average increases of 4-5% to 0-2%, trying to work with residents to make sure their homes are maintained. The Council should work on rewarding good landlords that are proactive and fair instead of penalizing them with rigid laws.

I would ask the Council to consider my concerns as listed above and amend their proposal for the time period of the increase freeze and come up with something fair that will help offset the many costs that landlords have for maintaining their communities.

Sincerely,

Kelly Soloway