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**Expedited Bill 18-20, Landlord-Tenant Relations - Rent Stabilization During Emergencies**  
**PUBLIC HEARING - April 21, 2020**  
**SUPPORT AMENDMENTS**

The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce (GGCC) is on the front lines of the economic crisis created by the COVID-19 emergency. We are interacting with business owners every day and doing what we can to help them get the financial support they need. When concerns over unreasonable rent increases were made in the media, I reached out to our residential landlords and asked about their intentions to raise rents. Not only were they not planning any significant rent increases, they are stepping up to do whatever they can to help tenants make it through this crisis. Like my Chamber colleagues, I was surprised and disappointed by the reports of 20-40% increases. It does not match the reality of what is happening in the broader multi-family rental industry. Placing a global rent freeze on the entire County may not be the most equitable way to protect a handful of residents from what appears to be a few unscrupulous property owners.

Assuming this Bill is moving forward, the GGCC supports the following amendments:

Support the Amendment that restricts this Bill to only this Covid19 related health emergency.

- I'm assuming the intention of this bill was not wide-spread rent control. Many emergencies do not impact one's ability to pay rent. It makes sense that this Bill be confined to the current health emergency and the economic crisis it has created.

Support the Amendment that the Bill only relate to existing tenants and not prospective new tenants.

- The goal is to protect existing residents from unforeseen rent increases. Prospective tenants would have a clear understanding of their financial obligations before they sign a new lease.

We also agree that this Bill should pertain only to residential properties and not commercial leases.

In addition to the amendments presented by Councilmembers, the GGCC supports the amendments outlined in the AOBA testimony. We rely on AOBA for providing detailed information on the multi-family residential rental industry.

Thank you for your efforts in helping the business community remain whole. After we come through this health emergency, we need to make sure that jobs remain intact to help all residents survive the economic crisis.

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