

Dear President Friedson and Council members,

My name is Melek Demir, and I have been a devoted resident, renter, and engaged voter in Montgomery County for over 13 years.

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and a dedicated advocate for Affordable Housing initiatives in our community. For the past several years, I have been working with Montgomery County renters who are in imminent danger of losing their homes. I have witnessed firsthand the challenges they face in securing safe and affordable housing. Unfortunately, the reality is that many families are burdened by housing costs, with a significant portion of their income allocated towards rent. This not only threatens their financial stability but also puts them at risk of homelessness.

On May 12th, I will become my own client and will face homelessness because when my lease expires on that date, the new lease will have an increased rate of 46%-143% (depending upon the term). To be clear, I have been offered a new lease of \$1,900/mo for a 500 sq foot, 38 step walk up apartment.

In recent years, the pressing need for affordable housing has become increasingly apparent, profoundly affecting lower- and middle-income residents. Despite efforts such as Governor Moore's 2025 Housing Package, the threat of homelessness looms large for many Montgomery County renters. This is where increased DHCA funding and programs like SEPH (Service to Prevent and End Homelessness) play a critical role and can provide a bridge for renters until such time that new protective legislation can be actualized.

Montgomery County's response to these challenges remains fragmented, and as elected representatives, it is incumbent upon you to take action. I urge you to prioritize funding for Affordable Housing initiatives and programs and endorse budgets that ensure housing stability for all residents. Access to shelter should be regarded as a fundamental right, and it is within your power to make a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals and families in our community.

I extend my deepest gratitude for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,
Melek Demir