

Omodamola Williams  
Gaithersburg, MD  
MORE Network



**Testimony in SUPPORT:**

**Bill 8-24 - Human Rights and Civil Liberties  
Fair Criminal History and Credit Screenings**

June 17, 2024

Dear County Council members,

The Montgomery County Racial Equity (MORE) Network supports Bill 8-24, with amendments. This bill aligns with our efforts for racial and housing justice, aiming to reduce homelessness and racial/social disparities.

We are a coalition of community activists, grassroots organizations, non-profits, and stakeholders dedicated to eliminating racial disparities and ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities. We focus on building relationships and fostering learning across organizations and issues. Housing justice has been a focus of the MORE Network since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Office of Legislative Oversight’s Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement for Bill 8-24 has a favorable read on this bill, noting especially that [“Enhanced staffing resources for the Office of Human Rights through Bill 8-24 could mitigate housing discrimination by enabling more targeted enforcement of the Housing Justice Act.”](#)

To strengthen this bill, we invite the Council to consider the following:

1. Set clear dates and make mandatory the annual housing survey and ensure it is easily accessible to the public.
2. Require housing providers to retain completed addendums, with annual randomized audits by the Office of Human Rights to verify compliance.
3. Share all addendums and public notices of tenants’ rights in the county’s top seven languages.
4. Clarify the definition of “credit scores within commercial reason,” as misleading credit screenings often block at-risk renters from housing.
5. DHCA should publicly disclose any violations of these rights on their upcoming multiunit housing database.

Addressing poverty in the county is crucial, and collaboration is key to ensuring no one is left behind. This bill will support second-chance families seeking housing and help curb discrimination.

Thank you for your consideration.