

**Bill 18-20, The Covid-19 Rent Relief Act
Testimony
April 21, 2020**

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County supports proposed Bill 18-20, the Covid-19 Rent Relief Act.

- We support programs and policies to maintain and increase the supply of affordable housing. We believe that rent increases during this extraordinary and difficult Covid-19 pandemic have the clear potential to lead to increased homelessness.
- The unemployment rate is growing rapidly.
- Many of our families are dealing with life threatening illness.
- A large number of our low-income families live in rental housing.
- Approximately half of them are considered cost burdened, meaning that they spend more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing.

According to a 2017 report, 23 percent are spending more than 50 percent of income for housing. A rent increase or a notice of one before these families have a chance to start to recover from the economic effects of the pandemic seems certain to lead to homelessness for many.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Diane Hibino & Kathy McGuire, co-presidents
Sally Roman, Housing Committee chair