25-20

Testimony
Rental Assistance – Amendments Bill 25-20
July 28, 2020

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County urges the County Council to join us in supporting the Rental Assistance – Amendments Bill 25-20. We support Montgomery County policies and programs to expand assistance to all low- and moderate- income renters in Montgomery County -- which this bill addresses through the Rental Assistance Program (RAP).

> Bill 25-20 is also spearheaded and supported by the County's Department of Health & Human Services as well as by County Executive Marc Elrich.

Bill 25-20, Rental Assistance – Amendments would reduce the age of eligibility for the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) from 62 to 55; clarify the definition of a person with a documented disability; remove the prohibition of eligibility of County residents without immigration documentation; and provide that the benefit amount for the Program is established by Method 3 regulation, which does not allow for County Council review of the regulation. The specific minimum and maximum benefit that may be paid to a household will still be determined annually by Method 3 regulation.

> One of the primary goals of this legislation is to ensure that access to RAP benefits is not conditioned upon a resident's immigration status.

This Bill will assist the increasing number of renter households in the County. Currently there are 14% of county renters living in overcrowded homes, usually due to unaffordable renter rates. A recent July Report forecasts that more than half of new home developments in the next 20 years will be multi-family rentals. Bill 25-20 would address unaffordable rent rates through the RAP's rent payment assistance.

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County asks for full support of the County Council for Bill 25-20, which would expand assistance to all low- and moderate- income renters in Montgomery County, including undocumented households.

Diane Hibino and Kathy McGuire, Co-Presidents
Sally Roman, Housing Committee Chair