



Submitted testimony on MC 8-24

Delegate Julie Palakovich Carr, House Chair
and Members, Montgomery County Delegation
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

November 27, 2023

Dear Delegate Palakovich Carr and Members of the Montgomery County Delegation:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Regional Policy Director for [Greater Greater Washington](#), a nonprofit that works to advance racial, economic, and environmental justice in land use, transportation, and housing throughout Greater Washington. GGWash supports MC 8-24 because it would facilitate housing production and help remediate long standing socioeconomic and racial segregation in Montgomery County.

This bill would prevent homeowners' association bylaws or deed restrictions from blocking housing types allowed by Montgomery County zoning, such as multi-family homes, basement apartments, or accessory dwelling units. For decades, communities in Montgomery County have used restrictive covenants to as a form of exclusion, as documented by the Planning Department's Mapping Segregation project.¹ Even after the Supreme Court struck down racially restrictive covenants in 1948,² there remain covenants that prevent the construction of housing types deemed undesirable. In one 1930s-era Silver Spring neighborhood built with covenants barring modest homes,³ the original developer even went so far as to sue a builder for building homes that were "too cheap in appearance" and forced them to make the homes more expensive.⁴

These covenants have real consequences. By restricting land in high-demand, high-opportunity communities to high-cost homes, they price out working people and force them into further-out areas. That in turn contributes to suburban sprawl, which exacerbates racial and socioeconomic segregation,


¹ <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/research-and-designation/mapping-segregation-project/>

² <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/334us1>

³

https://www.washingtonpost.com/realestate/silver-springs-woodside-park-an-older-suburb-holds-on-to-its-pastoral-vision/2021/03/16/2afe8f0a-84d5-11eb-8a8b-5cf82c3dffe4_story.html

⁴ <http://users.starpower.net/oshel/H09.htm>

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traffic congestion, environmental damage, and stress on our tax base. Private neighborhood associations should not be allowed to circumvent county laws to the detriment of all county residents.

We urge the county delegation to support this bill, and look forward to its passage in the General Assembly this spring. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" and the last name "Reed" clearly distinguishable.

Dan Reed
Regional Policy Director
Greater Greater Washington