

Renters Face Up to 72% Rent Increases

28 messages

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Tired of high rents? Unreasonable rent increases? Abusive or neglectful landlords? Not being heard as a renter?
The Montgomery County Renters Alliance, Inc. has arrived.

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Hampshire Towers Landlords Threaten To Raise Rents Upwards of 72%

Scores of long-term tenants, many of them seniors, may be forced to move



Hampshire Towers apartments, a two building apartment complex located on the edge of Takoma Park on New Hampshire Avenue, has a "tortured history" according to some county officials. Purchased by [Tenacity Group](#) in 2006 for just over \$15 million, the complex of 216 apartment homes racked up [hundreds of code violations](#) that went for years without adequate remedy or enforcement.

For reasons that are still not clear to most observers, the building had been in severe disrepair. The County expected Tenacity would be able to balance the sale of about 210 units as condos at one of two buildings to repair the remaining units in the other building. The County's [Department of Housing and Community Affairs \(DHCA\)](#) signed a rental agreement with Tenacity in 2008 removing those remaining apartments from Takoma Park's rent control laws (Takoma Park is the only municipality in the County with rent control), reportedly in exchange for an agreement by the landlord to make necessary repairs. But by 2013, it appears those repairs were not made. But the rental agreement, signed and extended in January by the DHCA Director, Clarence Snuggs, enables the newest owners, [Orlo Fund](#), a private real estate investment group based in Laurel, to raise rents on scores of tenants upwards between 25-72%. Many residents are likely to lose their homes. Questions also remain as to why so many code violations were permitted to go without repair or adequate code enforcement for years.



"It appears that the agreement thought of everything except the impact on the renters," said [Council Member Marc Elrich](#) whose office has been working with the renters of Hampshire Towers. According to a [Labor Day Weekend article on the Hampshire Towers](#) and the plight of renter regionally in the Washington Post, Elrich labeled the deal a "sham."

Hampshire Towers residents, working with the Renters Alliance and [CASA](#), organized a general meeting of residents on Thursday, August 27th with representatives from DHCA to explain the deal and the renters' options, which were limited to signing leases by

August 31st, or face sixty days notice to vacate their homes. On Monday, August 31st, renters, led by tenants association president Margaret Buraimoh and vice president Leeroi Boker, held a rally and press conference to highlight their plight that included Council Members Marc Elrich and [Tom Hucker](#) (represented by staffer Brian Anleu), State Delegate [David Moon](#) and [Senator Jamie Raskin](#), and Takoma Park Ward 6 city council member



[Fred Schultz](#). About a dozen Renters Alliance members from area buildings also joined the residents in a show of solidarity. Negotiations to space out the increases continue, but renters and county officials are not optimistic that the excessive increases will be abated.



"Renters at Hampshire Towers are the latest example of the need for expanded renters advocacy, education and outreach in our region," said Matt Losak, Renters Alliance executive director. "Renters across the county face being priced out, retaliated against by unscrupulous and irresponsible property managers and landlords, evicted without just cause, made to live in housing conditions that violate state and county law

and too often left to pursue inadequate government remedies. With each renter injustice, we see our neighborhoods destabilized so that a few can make millions in profits while our communities bear the costs. It's time for Montgomery County to understand that renters' homes matter."

Council Member Elrich's office is coordinating a stakeholders meeting to look at what happened, what, if anything, might still be done for the tenants and how to prevent it from happening again.

Hampshire Towers Press Coverage

["They're Putting Us Out:" Rent Hikes in Maryland Spotlight Affordable Housing Needs, Washington Post, September 6, 2015](#)

[Takoma Park Rent Hike May Be County Wide Issue, WTOP, 103.5 FM \(all week\), August 31-Sept 6](#)

[Residents in Montgomery County Apartments Protest Rent Increases, WJLA, August 31](#)

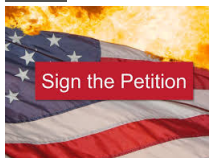
[Residents Battle Landlord Over Massive Rent Hikes, WUSA 9, August 31](#)

[Takoma Park Apartment Building Residents Upset Over Steep Rent Hike, Fox 5, August 31.](#)

Renter Protection Bill Petition Still Going Strong. Sign Today.

Renter Protection [Bill 19-15](#). [Sign the Petition.](#)

If you have signed the petition, did you forward it to friends, neighbors, business associates, faith communities, clubs, associations, business you know?



Greetings, Neighbors, Friends and Allies of the Montgomery County Renters Alliance.

We created a petition to George Leventhal, Council President and Nancy Floreen, Chair, Planning, Housing and Economic Development committee, and the seven members of the County Council which says:

The Montgomery County Council is considering Bill 19-15 to:

- Require landlords to offer 2 year leases at each renewal
- End excessive month-to-month lease fees

- Increase code inspections
- Require the use of clear, legal "model" County leases
- Publish information about landlords that raise rents 100-150 percent higher than County recommended guidelines
- Require landlords to distribute the Landlord/Tenant handbook at lease signing
- Require accurate and thorough rental housing data collection for use in public policy

Please share this email with your members, friends and listserves. This is the link to the petition for you to cut and paste into your own email, or you can forward this email:

http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/support-renter-protection?source=c.em&r_by=13591620

Have you signed the petition? [Click HERE.](#)

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