

Garage Spaces Conversion to Apartments on Case No. 21385

Written Testimony of Aquib Sylvester (son of Veronica Sylvester)

I. Introduction and Standing

1. My name is Aquib Sylvester, and my mother lives at 1415 Tuckerman Street NW #304 Washington DC, 20011.
2. I am appearing before the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) regarding Case Number 21385, Application Concerning Removal of Garage Parking Spaces at 1415 Tuckerman St. NW Apt. #304 Washington DC, 20011.
3. I am speaking today as the son and primary caregiver of my 84-year-old mother who is a tenant in this building. She lives with hemiplegia-paralysis on one side of her body—and expressive aphasia, which has left her unable to speak following a stroke.
4. My mother is completely dependent on both my brother and me for her essential medical and health needs.
5. I am personally and deeply affected by this issue because the garage spaces we currently rely on are essential to my mother's medical care, safety, and comfort. Losing them would make her daily life — and ours as her caregivers — extraordinarily difficult.

II. Factual Background and Summary of Position

6. The proposal before the BZA concerns removing or reducing the number of garage parking spaces available to residents.
7. I am opposed to this proposal.
8. I oppose it because the garage is not a convenience for my family—it is a necessity that makes it possible to care for my disabled mother in a safe and dignified way.

III. Detailed Statement of Concerns

A. Safety and Accessibility for My Mother

9. My mother is paralyzed on her left side, which means that every trip outside our home requires careful planning and significant physical effort. On days with heavy rain or extreme cold, the presence of slippery ice or puddles makes even a few steps outside treacherous. Having access to our garage allows us to safely transfer her into the car without exposing her to these dangerous conditions.

10. The garage also protects vehicles from being exposed to the elements for long periods, which could seriously affect her already fragile health.

B. Street Parking Is Unsafe and Unrealistic

11. Without a garage, we are constrained to risky methods of transporting her from the wheelchair to the car on the street. On more than one occasion, she has almost fallen during these transfers.

C. The Challenge of Medical, Food, and Household Supplies for Caregiving

12. My mother needs regular medical equipment and supplies, many of which are heavy or bulky. Transporting these items from street parking into the building would be exhausting and unsafe, especially during bad weather or when parking is far away. Having access to the garage allows us to load and unload her equipment safely, efficiently, and with dignity.

D. Impact on Overall Quality of Living

13. The garage provides not only safety but also peace of mind. It protects our vehicles from theft, vandalism, and severe weather conditions.

14. After returning from my mother's medical appointments, I often find myself struggling to search for street parking. Moving her from wherever we find a space is not only exhausting but also stressful.

15. The garage significantly enhances everyone's quality of life, especially for elderly tenants who may struggle with cleaning snow off their cars or walking long distances from the street. Removing the garages would create unnecessary stress, anxiety, and hardship for many residents who depend on them.

IV. Conclusion

16. For all these reasons, I respectfully ask the Board of Zoning Adjustment to deny the proposal to remove or reduce garage parking spaces. This change would directly harm vulnerable residents like my mother and undermine the well-being of the entire community.

17. Thank you for listening and for taking the time to understand how deeply this affects our daily lives. I

appreciate your consideration and would be happy to answer any questions.

Personal Closing Statement:

Commissioners, as you make your decision, I ask that you think about my mother—an 84-year-old woman who has faced so much and now depends on the small things that make her daily life possible. For her and for so many others here, the garage is not a luxury. It's what allows us to care for her safely and with dignity, especially in difficult weather or late hours.

The main goals of any landlord should be to ensure that tenants are happy and taken care of. Removing the garage would only do the opposite. When tenants feel supported, it strengthens the entire community and benefits the landlord as well—through better reviews, positive word-of-mouth, and a stronger sense of pride in the building. When tenants feel valued and secure, everyone wins.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aqib.S." The "A" is a large, stylized letter, and "qib.S." is written in a smaller, more standard font to its right.

Aquib Sylvester
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December 9, 2025