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230 Rhode Island Ave, NE
Case 04-33 Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning
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Good Evening, My name is Aliya Rocker, I'm 23 and I live at 230 Rhode Island Avenue in Ward 5 I support the Campaign for Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning's proposal for the District.

For the past year I have worked for the Generations Program at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC. I'm a home visitor, and everyday I visit mothers who live in DC and PG County. We talk about child development, their physical and mental health, as well as community resources. Over the past few months the hot topic has been finding them a place to live. According to one of our Case Managers, out of 250 young women, at least half are in need of housing

There is clearly an affordable housing crisis in DC. Many of the mothers I talk to are on a waiting list to obtain Section 8 and in the mean time they live in over-crowded houses with other family members. If they aren't so lucky they shuttle from house to house depending on who will let them stay. Others go home to crowded shelters knowing that once their time is up, they may be on the streets. Some of these young women are married and have full time jobs. Others are still in school, and working part-time jobs. All of them are working to the best of their ability to make sure that their children have a better life than they do

For the past year I have been living in a one-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island Gardens. And even though I graduated from Howard University, have begun a career, and am dedicated to helping young women in DC, I can't afford to continue living in my building Not to mention that none of my friends, who've also graduated from college, live in DC on their own. Either they had to move to Maryland, or have to live with a couple of roommates so that ends meet.

This is a problem for everyone including those who go to work everyday to improve the lives of others, like myself. This city should want to be rich with the energy, passion, and brainpower of young professionals. It makes no sense that I can't live in the city I've come to love through college. Does DC not want to be draped in the potential of recent graduates who see ways of bettering their communities and who've taken the steps to do so? Hard working people have lived in the district for generations and we all deserve to make our home here.

If my clients and I had somewhere affordable to live we would cherish it I have friends and colleagues who have chosen to begin their families and careers in DC and if given a chance to own a piece of the district we would value the opportunity.

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We want to live here. We want to contribute. We will invest ourselves in creating hope for all of DC. We are looking for somewhere to settle and grow and once that need is met we can finish meeting other needs, as well as nurturing others to do the same.

It is important that for-sale units are affordable for 20 years and that rental units are affordable for 50 years. We must build the stock of affordable housing in the district, so that moderate-income professionals have some hope of finding a home.

Please make sure that some of the units are also offered to the housing authority so that my clients and their children have a better chance for a few rooms of refuge.

Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning can help this crisis, please give us a chance to make a life in DC. Thank you.

"TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR INCLUSIONARY ZONING,
PROPOSAL CASE NUMBER: 04-33."

Good evening, members of the DC Zoning Commission, my name is Vernon Shannon. I am the pastor of the John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, The National Church of Zion Methodism, located at 1615 14th Street, NW, Washington D.C. I come before you in support of the Campaign for Inclusionary Zoning's Proposal, case number: 04-33. I thank you for the opportunity to address you on this vital issue. I speak to you because I know that affordable housing is a serious issue affecting our members and working families, our members whose ancestors gave full measure of their blood, labor and tears for the making of this city.

It is no secret that many of our members have already been forced to move out of this city because they can no longer afford to live in the city of their birth. If you notice the cars parked around our church on Sunday morning, you will notice that the majority of the cars are from Maryland and many are from Virginia. These are members who once lived in Washington but who because of soaring housing prices, now live outside of our city.

One of the historic Churches of our city, a church that has contributed significantly to the stability and vitality of this city is moving out of our city, away from the legacy, and stones of tradition and heritage, laid by its people. This is a major loss to our city, a loss that cannot be replaced.

Madam Chairperson, if the Inclusionary Zoning's Proposal is not passed by your Commission, what will be the implications inferred by its defeat. I would suggest to you that not to pass this proposal is to infer that it is well to make a distinction between the peoples of our city, a distinction between those who can afford to live in this city and those who cannot. And if we make that distinction are we not giving birth to a desperate generation who will some day rise up and create discomfort for those who can afford to remain in our city. How long do we think people will accept an attitude that says "move out of our city if you cannot afford to live in our city".

Madam Chairperson, the simple fact is that for the working class, incomes have not risen in tandem with housing prices in the District. From January 1999 to March 2003, the price of homes for sale here rose four times faster than incomes. In the same period, the price of rentals rose three times faster.

Madam Chairperson, is our city dividing its people between the haves and the have-nots? Are we not building a wall not unlike the Berlin Wall, dividing the east from the west? Who will step on the stage of justice and say with the force of law; "tear down these walls of injustice and division!". so that we might truly have one city wherein all can live in peace and with justice for all.

Around the world and in our own nation we have seen what happens to people when they are marginalized, dispossessed, dispossessed, disinherited, and pushed out. They become desperate, angry and will do anything, including taking their own life to retaliate.

I believe that the proposal on mandatory inclusionary zoning is a good beginning for our city and will provide hope for many who will be forced to moved away. and it will help our city become stronger and more supportive of working families and will become a microcosm of the global community.

Thank you for allow^{ing} me to testify here this evening and I pray that you will do the right thing by approving for this proposal.