

**Ms. Neeka Sullivan – Feb. 23 Hearing Testimony
Case No. 14-18A**

I lived 30 years at Saratoga, 15 years on Brentwood. When I lived here before it was really nice, everyone got along, there were a lot of elderly ladies who used to sit outside on chairs and watch kids and make sure they didn't fight, it really was like family. If you've been in the community that long that's how you feel, like a family. Now, it seems like we are prisoners in here. They've fenced us in. We can't move or say anything out of the way, because they give you an infraction, or a letter, or barring your family away and we need our family. These things caused divisions in the community. Kids are scared of being outside, we are not allowed to sit outside on porches – we used to be able to sit outside and have some snacks and enjoy ourselves.

When the guards came, at first we thought “oh this is great, we don't have to call the police we can handle things here instead” but we found out they weren't there for us, they were there to harass us. The security came and said we can't sit on the porch and so we sat on the dirt, then they said we couldn't sit there so we sat on the sidewalks, then they said we can't go out at all. Kids run inside when they see security. They talk down to us and are very nasty to us. They have been seen smoking drugs on the property. We've had several different security companies. These security come around looking in the doors and just looking for something to attack us with. We know that this is coming from Mid-City to harass us and make us uncomfortable to push us off the property. They made everyone, mostly senior citizens get rid of their dogs. I got doctors notes to keep mine for health reasons. Even when we try to do nice things on the property, like I planted some nice flowers, and they came and dug all my flowers up and threw them in the trash.

This is about money. They don't want us here. They want to move all the black people, Spanish people, Chinese people, and whoever else low-income that's in their way out of Washington, D.C. When they started tearing down houses around DC, we knew what was going, we just didn't think it would happen to us. They tell us to go other places, in fact, Mr. Meers told us we could take our vouchers and go to Southeast or to North Carolina. I'm not leaving Northeast DC.

I would love to have a nice new apartment. Mid-City's plan targets families. And in their plan they want to cut affordable units and they want to put 200 seniors only units which we didn't ask for and which we don't want. First of all we don't even have 200 seniors in our community. And, a lot of seniors live with their family, and do not want to live by themselves. I'm a senior, 66 years old, and I'm raising my grandkids. I would love to live in a nice place with them, but this redevelopment is not planned for us.

We have a lot of homeless people out here that need a place, and when you have a change of living it can create a change in you. When people feel taken care of, they will be more active and happy in their community. A lot of people are so heartbroken and broken down. Mid-City needs to keep 535 units of affordable housing at the same bedroom sizes. Mid-City is still getting government money, so why can't they keep this affordable housing? We could bring some of the people back who were pushed out and we could have some families here from those hotels on New York ave and DC General. Every day we see more people standing out in the cold in front of Virginia Williams. They are turning them away left and right – they can't help you. Mid-City is trying to make things even worse, and the city should not let them.

It's not that Mid-City doesn't have the land, because they do. And they have the money. And if they don't have the money, we can go to the Housing Production Trust Fund and get it. And if you don't agree to that, then that let's us know that you don't want us here! You are throwing us out, you are not trying to help DC. All Mid-City is thinking about is a profit. All these politicians in office have said they're going to get rid of homelessness and help people find homes and I haven't seen it yet. I don't know what they are going to do, but we are not going to be pushed out, we are not going to let them take us out. People at Brookland Manor are frustrated and stressed out. You will have to deal with us, and we are not going anywhere when the plows come to plow us out I will be right there at Brookland Manor. We are here to say preserve affordable housing! This is not just for us, we are fighting for the next generation that needs it.