

## FW: Important Council Meeting on 8/2/23

Michele Gardner

Wed 8/2/2023 10:54 AM

To: Heather Abrams <habrams@townoffairfax.org>; Christine Foster <cfoster@townoffairfax.org>

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**From:** Susan Mulloy <susanmulloy58@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 2, 2023 1:39 AM

**To:** Michele Gardner <mgardner@townoffairfax.org>; Stephanie Hellman <shellman@townoffairfax.org>; Chance Cutrano <ccutrano@townoffairfax.org>; Bruce Ackerman <backerman@townoffairfax.org>; Barbara Coler <bcoler@townoffairfax.org>; Lisel Blash <LBlash@townoffairfax.org>

**Subject:** Important Council Meeting on 8/2/23

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members,

Thank you for persevering in your mission to protect Fairfax tenants. I hope to speak at tonight's meeting in support of your brave actions on these tenant protection ordinances. I urge you to resist the demand of the petitioners for an immediate cancellation of the ordinances. I ask that you schedule an election date that allows for the largest voter participation (November 2024). And I ask you to keep the rent cap at 60% of the CPI.

I thank all who have contributed to the debate in good faith. I want to discuss some ideas of justice and human dignity relevant to our situation. "Some consider justice to be limited to impartial rules safeguarding individuals' liberties and property rights. Vast inequalities of wealth are thereby justified, for if, as is generally assumed, our social institutions rest on fair and impartial rules. To restrict my liberty rather than to appeal to my voluntary charity is to 'conspire against my freedom' ". The predicament of the poor thus ceases to be the stuff of moral tragedy. \*

But those who view justice through a moral lens are on the side of tenants in this struggle. At its heart this view sees human persons as creatures endowed with dignity and inherent worth. Humans are to be treated as moral agents who are entitled to the basic rights of liberty, security, and subsistence. The basic economic conditions of human welfare are essential to human dignity and are due persons by right. The moral claims of the poor are just entitlements rather than paternalistic charity.

The 1986 pastoral letter of the Roman Catholic Bishops writes: "Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person...We judge any economic system by what it does *for* and *to* people and by how it permits all to *participate* in it."

Our task tonight is to safeguard the tenant protections embodied in both the rent stabilization and the just cause ordinances. These are a first step in protecting our neighbors from unjust evictions, from housing insecurity, from huge rent increases, from the necessity of living in their cars, from moving away as the only option to remain housed. These ordinances are necessary in the housing emergency facing us all.

Thank you,  
Susan Mulloy  
Fairfax tenant  
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\* My arguments are based on the article, "Poverty in the United States" by William O'Neill, S.J. in *Reading the Signs of the Times*, Paulist Press, 1993