

**Montgomery County Council
Testimony of Dr. Sanjay Rai
Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, Montgomery College
Public Hearing for Bill 17-21, Community Informed Police Training
June 22, 2021**

Good afternoon, members of the Montgomery County Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of Bill 17-21, Community-Informed Police Training.

Gardez bein, or “guard well,” is worn on the sleeve of every police officer in Montgomery County. This important calling—to guard well—cannot be left solely to the brave men and women of Montgomery County’s police department. It takes all of us to ensure our community is a safe, healthy, and vibrant place.

At Montgomery College, we understand that our faculty and staff, who help educate and train the next generation of police officers, must do our part help ensure officers have all the knowledge, skills, and

abilities they need to succeed in guarding our community. That is why we joined in helping create this community informed police training.

With the heightened awareness of inequities in policing this past year, faculty began to review our criminal justice programs. We wanted to be sure our curriculum is relevant and includes the elements our community and police department needs. An array of faculty and staff began to think anew about the College's role in training and educating police officers.

We think that, in partnership with the County, this community-informed police training will help develop police officers with deeper competencies in race equity perspectives. Officers will hone skills in mediation, conflict resolution, de-escalation, and communication. Without question, this partnership would become a national model. And it will help Montgomery County be a safer place where all are "guarded well."

Thank you.