



**Testimony of Michael Knapp
Chair of the Montgomery College Board of Trustees
FY22-FY27 Capital Improvements Program
February 8, 2022**

Good afternoon! My name is Mike Knapp and I am the chair of the Board of Trustees at Montgomery College. It is good to be with you today.

Anniversaries provide moments to reflect on the past and look to the future. Montgomery College is at such a moment.

Seventy-five years ago, MC began operations in Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. The result—homegrown talent that makes Montgomery County thrive. Alumni who span the generations—like the legendary basketball coach, Morgan Wootten, trailblazer and business leader Sol Graham, and today’s entrepreneurs like Julie Verratti, founder of Denizens Brewery—exemplify how education changes lives and fuels our economy.

Moments like this are important inflexion points. How do we put the pandemic in the rear view mirror and address its disruptions and the inequities it laid bare? Collectively, we must consider how we will set the course for the next 75 years.

One good step is to advance efforts to place a campus in the East County. The feasibility study you launched clearly documents the need for an anchor institution like MC in this part of our county to enrich the life of the community and open doors to opportunity. Funds in FY24 would initiate specific planning efforts to bring a campus to this underserved region. (The operating budget will seek funds to stand up an education center in FY23.)

New facilities on existing campuses are important, too. It is imperative that we finally commit to building a new student services center at the Germantown Campus. Enrolling in college is complex even at your community’s college. Important services located in one place will ease the process and help us to welcome more students to campus. As we dig out of the pandemic, now is the time to make it easier to enroll at MC.

The Catherine and Isiah Leggett Math and Science Building is another example of your efforts to deliver modern facilities to existing campuses to ensure equity and access. Steel beams are quickly rising out of the ground giving shape to the building at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. We are planning a topping off ceremony for March. Thank you for your commitment to this important project.

In addition, while new facilities are clearly important, existing facilities need attention as well. Your approval of the funds to address deferred maintenance is vital to keep our existing campus buildings secure, accessible, green, functional, and safe. Modernizing our aging libraries to make them spaces that invite students to study, find books, and access technology is essential to help students succeed. The Resource Center (library) on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus needs immediate attention to address structural and service requirements.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, please support Montgomery College's six-year capital improvements program of \$347 million, which is fiscally prudent and puts little new fiscal pressure on Montgomery County's capital resources.

Today's alumni—like Shruti Mistry, a biomedical engineer at the Food and Drug Administration—will power our county forward just as Morgan Wootton, Sol Graham, and Julie Verratti did the last 75 years. Together, we can empower more residents to do the same and lead Montgomery County confidently into the future.

Thank you.