

Good evening members of the County Council. It's an honor to testify Infront of you today. My Name is Henok Mengistu, & I live in Silver Spring.

Just last year, I co-founded Ethiopique LLC, a company that aims to bridge information gap for the immigrant community in the county and its surroundings by providing timely information, news and other opportunities in the language and the context that best fits the immigrant community.

For most of us immigrants' life in the US is a complete turnaround.

Some of the things that brought a culture shock to the community include the weather, which is unpredictable and to the extreme, school closures, crime and investigation reports and traffic reports are few examples. Furthermore, not all immigrants residing in the county are fluent in English, therefore even though there are plenty of opportunities in the county, unless they are communicated via the right tools and context, they will become obsolete.

On the evening of Mar 31, 2022 I was watching NBC4s Chief Meteorologist Doug Kamerrer, on live television, warning his family to take cover from a possible tornado. I immediately translated, contextualized and shared the news on our social media platforms explaining the gravity of the situation and the response was huge. So many followers did not hear about it until we shared it. I want you to imagine what would have happened to this community if such disaster happens.

For these and many other reasons that I can not explain in 2 minutes, I suggest there should be support for disenfranchised communities and clustered multi-ethnic media and news companies to join the mainstream platforms.

So today I am here to ask you to allocate a minute fraction of your resources to support our efforts in providing timely information, current

news and other opportunities in the language and the context the community relates which intern enables the community thrive in the county and beyond. I thank you.