

Testimony of Lori Ulrich, AFSCME, Montgomery College

Montgomery County Council

FY25 Operating Budget Public Hearing

April 8, 2024

1:30 p.m.

Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is Lori Ulrich, and I am the president of AFSCME Local 2380, the staff union, at Montgomery College.

This Council is perennially reminded of the value Montgomery College brings to Montgomery County via transformative open enrollment education and matriculation to further education, as well as skill building for job enhancements, career changes and adaptation to changing markets. We are deeply diverse, with our entire population – faculty, staff, and students – coming from many countries, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds.

As president of the staff Union, I would like to draw particular attention to the staff portion of the approximate 3,000 people Montgomery College employs. We are responsible for everything that undergirds the success of this institution, from making sure buildings and grounds are clean, safe, and well maintained, that faculty have the materials they need for instruction, that emerging technology and course design are

identified and implemented, and that our libraries are robust with resources and accessible to the public. Many of the people I represent are minimally educated and people of color. This institution has a deep commitment to justice and equity. We put into action those values that we hold dear by availing transformative resources and opportunities inward, to our staff, so that everyone has the chance to improve their lives through their affiliation with Montgomery College. For example, as a combined effort between AFSCME Local 2380, HR, and Workforce Development, we are on the verge of providing ESL classes to building services workers, as professional development, during their shifts. English proficiency is a barrier to more skilled/better paid employment, and it is our hope that one less barrier can be a catalyst for learning computer applications, getting a trade credential, or even picking up an Associate's Degree as a mechanism to better provide for their families. All of this is possible at MC!

The members of AFSCME Local 2380 strongly hope that the County Council remembers the fiscal stewardship partnership with Montgomery College. We are asking you to recognize our fiscal prudence and conservative budget requests by fully funding the College's FY25 budget.

Thank you for your time this afternoon!