



**Testimony**  
**Montgomery College Board of Trustees**  
**Gloria Aparicio Blackwell, Chair**  
**FY27 Capital Budget and the FY27-FY32 Capital Improvements Plan**  
**February 10, 2026**

Good evening!

My name is Gloria Aparicio Blackwell. As the Chair of the Montgomery College Board of Trustees, I bring our appreciation for your commitment to the students we serve.

I want to begin with an urgent need affecting students today. Built when Lyndon Johnson was president, the Theatre Arts Building is beyond its useful life inside and out—and, requires attention now.

This workhorse of a facility is a well-used community use space and a workforce generator. In response to the needs of our community, Theatre Arts students leave Montgomery College prepared to fill more than 28,000 jobs across the region's arts and entertainment industry.

Alumni like Shaquille Stewart, the former Executive Director of Silver Spring Stage, and Camilo Linares, who performs across the region, credit their MC experience as central to their success.

Theatre Arts is the only place where students can learn and hone their craft to become the scene builders, lighting and sound techs as well as actors and directors.

Just like students in STEM disciplines, performing arts students need safe and modern classrooms and labs, technology, and equipment that meet today's academic and industry standards.

Please modernize this important building now to help the next Shaquille succeed in the DMV's nationally ranked theatre sector.

Let me assure you that MC is ready for this moment. The Board, along with the faculty and staff, are ever vigilant about MC as a place where equity, and inclusion are a priority even during these turbulent times.

Second, as affordability grows as a concern, your community's college remains the place to obtain a high quality, affordable post-secondary education.

In fact, the College served 46,341 students in all of FY25—that's an increase of 16% since FY22.

And, these students—be they displaced federal workers, veterans, recent high school graduates or residents looking to upskill—need modern classrooms, labs, libraries, secure locations and IT to unlock their potential.

So please continue to support the College's anchor projects:

- The Rockville library renovation
- The Germantown Student Services Center
- The Germantown Student Affairs and Science Building
- Deferred maintenance projects across all our locations
- Information Technology

- And the East County Campus

With regard to the East County Campus, together, we can keep this future-forward project on course to unlock opportunity for *all* Montgomery County residents.

Turning to new projects, help us protect our people and assets across our locations.

Additionally, with your appropriation of fee revenue, we will also tackle roads and parking lot maintenance.

In closing,

- with almost \$26M from fund balance already invested in the CIP,
- the use of fee revenue from our students and employees,
- and new project requests that are small in scope but critical,
- it is clear—MC remains the County's fiscal partner.

Please help MC meet this moment for our students and our county. Together, we can generate the momentum our county needs with affordable access to an exceptional education and extraordinary outcomes.