



Montgomery County Council

FY27 Operating Budget hearing

April 8, 2026

Testimony of Jose Abraham, Montgomery College Performing Arts Alumnus

Members of the Montgomery County Council,

My name is Jose Abraham. I am a longtime Montgomery County resident now living in Germantown, a graduate of Watkins Mill High School, the Assistant Technical Director at Round House Theater in Bethesda—and a proud Montgomery College performing arts alumnus.

I am testifying to ask you to **please fully fund Montgomery College’s FY27 operating budget to keep tuition affordable** for residents like me to be able to earn a degree.

As a theater industry professional and MC performing arts alumnus, I can assure you that Montgomery College provides the talent DC’s theater industry needs. There is a shortage of workers and an absolute need for prepared, high-quality workers—set builders, sound and lighting technicians, and more. I know from experience when hiring—I personally turn to Montgomery College to seek out the well-trained employees I need.

Without Montgomery College and its affordable tuition, higher education would not have been a possibility for me. As a child raised by my immigrant mother in a single-parent household, affordability was the bottom line. Because of MC’s low tuition and with the help of scholarships, I completed my associate’s degree in performing arts. I am the first in my family to earn a college degree.

Montgomery College laid the foundation for my career. MC gave me a high-quality, top-notch education that prepared me to go on and earn a bachelor’s degree. The performing arts faculty and program at MC are fantastic. I gained skills through hands-on experience—from the Summer Dinner Theatre program to annual musicals and plays.

I have seen the power of an MC performing arts degree and the respect it garners from employers. Before I landed my current job at Round House Theater, which is one of the top 5 largest theater companies in the area, I worked in venues across the region: Olney Theater, Adventure Theater in Glen Echo, Imagination Stage, Signature Theater, Fitzgerald Theater, Arena Stage, Shakespeare Theatre Company, DC’s Capitol Fringe Festival, GALA Hispanic Theater, and First Stage. MC prepared me, and the theater industry hired me.

Please fully fund Montgomery College's FY27 operating budget so more students can get the skills they need to succeed.

And please fund MC's Theatre Arts Building renovation. Nothing in the building has changed since I was a student—it is woefully out of date and cannot fully prepare students for today's theater venues.

Thank you for all you do for Montgomery County and Montgomery College.