

## Ruth March 2026 testimony

Good afternoon, Members of the County Council budget. My name is Ruth Guevara, I am a resident of Silver Spring 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. I am here today to urge the board to maintain full funding for key health and human services programs that have a great impact on our children.

I am going to start by reading the mission statement of the County Council which is to legislate for the peace, good government, health, safety, and welfare of Montgomery County and establish policies under which a system of public administration and finance provides services effectively, efficiently, and equitably. Thinking of their mission is why I am focusing on our next generations, our children. Health and human services programs are essential to their wellbeing, and we should all be concerned about them.

One of the programs that help our children is the MCPS Prekindergarten/Head Start program it serves low-income families with 3 year old children. This includes children with disabilities. There are limited spaces available in certain areas but is always good to look for the opportunity. Children and families in the program receive comprehensive educational, social, medical, dental, mental health, and nutrition services, speech/language, and health screenings.

Another good children's program is Linkages to learning, it provides accessible services to at-risk children and their families to improve adjustment to and performance in school, home, and community. Prevention and early intervention services include health, mental health, social services and educational support to improve the well-being of children and their families through a collaborative delivery of school-based services that address the social, economic, health, and emotional issues that interfere with the academic success of a child Linkages to Learning help families thrive.

I ask that we continue to invest and fund these Programs. The services provided by these programs improve children health, boost academic achievement, increase future income, and reduce early crime. For children in low income households early intervention is crucial, particularly in the first five years, to build foundational skills and support family stability. Yes, that right, support family stability. Now in days with the increase of taxes for medium income families, both parents must work to provide for their house, and their family members. Just think about it, working 8 hours, tired, concern about their children. That is a lot, and the day has only 24 hours, so, a little help will be a great way to contribute to our society, and avoid future problems.

( I will close the testimony with this paragraph )

I strongly encourage the board to prioritize funding for these essential programs. Thank you for your time and your service to our community.