

**Karyn Zaayenga**

**Vice President, AFSCME Local 2380**

**Montgomery College**

**April 7, 2026**

**Montgomery County Council FY27 Operating Budget Testimony**

Good evening. My name is Karyn Zaayenga, and I urge you to fully fund Montgomery College's FY27 operating budget.

Since 2017, I have worked as an Instructional Associate at the Writing, Reading, and Language Center on the Rockville Campus. I am also the Vice President of the Montgomery College Staff Union, AFSCME Local 2380, and tonight, I speak on behalf of the staff who make this institution function.

Our staff are the backbone of student success. We tutor students, maintain safe facilities, process financial aid, keep technology running, and support classrooms and labs. But our staff must also be able to afford to live and work here.

Over half of our bargaining unit consists of administrative assistants and facilities staff—essential workers who keep this college running. Yet too many are priced out of Montgomery County. Much is made of a living wage, but many of our employees make below the living wage for Montgomery County.

Of our 466 staff members, 128 live below the living wage for Montgomery College as single adults (27%). Many more would be below the living wage if they have children. Many work second and third jobs or endure long commutes just to stay in these roles.

When staff cannot afford to stay, students feel it. Tutor wait times increase. Facilities struggle to keep up with cleaning and repairs. Critical services slow down.

This is not just a staff issue. It is a student success issue—and a community issue.

Montgomery College transforms lives. We provide an exceptional education with extraordinary outcomes. With your support, we can maintain safe, modern facilities and retain the dedicated staff our students depend on.

Fully funding this budget is not just an investment in the College—it is an investment in Montgomery County's workforce, economy, and future.

The MC staff union, AFSCME Local 2380, not only WANTS you to vote in favor of full funding; we NEED you to. Thank you.