



**Montgomery County Council
FY27 Operating Budget Hearing
Testimony of Nolawi Mesganaw
Montgomery College Student, East County Education Center
Montgomery County Council
April 7, 2026**

Good evening, Council President Fani-González and members of the Montgomery County Council.

I appreciate the honor to speak before you all this evening. My name is Nolawi Mesganaw. I am a Silver Spring resident and a student at Montgomery College's newest location, the East County Education Center. I would like to thank you for your continued support of Montgomery College.

I am here today to ask the Council to please fully fund MC's operating budget, which will keep tuition affordable and higher education for our community accessible.

I am an Early College student studying cybersecurity at the East County Education Center. I am excited to earn my associate's degree while also earning my diploma from Springbrook High School! I plan to transfer to continue my education at a four-year university, like the University of Maryland Global Campus. My long-term goal is to become a cybersecurity professional focused on critical infrastructure right here in Montgomery County to stay and contribute to the community that has given me so much.

Montgomery College has transformed my life. Having an Early College option at the East County Education Center was a gamechanger. When I learned that I could take part in a program so close to home, I was on board. My family and I knew this was an opportunity to get a jumpstart on my college education while saving us money. The Early College program has given me—and many others in my community—access to an exceptional educational opportunity, including experienced faculty. This past year, I have gotten to know and engage with my instructors in impactful ways. Thanks to the partnership between MC and MCPS, I can follow my dream to earn a college degree and a fulfilling career.

Please fund MC's budget to keep tuition affordable. Just like me, current and future MC students need to be able to afford to earn a degree that leads to a great future.

Thank you for all you do for residents in the East County and across Montgomery County.

And thank you for supporting my college, Montgomery College. You are changing lives— like mine.