



**Montgomery County Council
FY27 Operating Budget Hearing
Testimony of Julio Lopez
Montgomery College Student, Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus
Montgomery County Council
April 7, 2026**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Julio Cezar Lopez. I am a Rockville resident and a nursing student at the Montgomery College Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

I am here to thank you for your support of Montgomery College and to ask that you fully fund MC's operating budget. With your support, MC can continue to offer affordable tuition, which is critically important for students like me.

I came to Montgomery College after moving to Maryland in 2020, during the pandemic. I had just graduated from high school in California. I did not qualify for federal financial aid, but I could not afford to attend college without a scholarship or affordable tuition. Then, I found Montgomery College. I chose MC because it was one of the few places that made higher education accessible, realistic, and—most importantly—affordable.

Because of MC's affordable tuition, I was able to pursue my nursing degree. Affordability is not just helpful—it is essential. Without it, students like me simply would not have the opportunity to pursue a career in healthcare. As the president of MC's Nursing Club, I know firsthand from conversations with my fellow students that affordability is critical. Most of my peers work while

attending college—including me—and many are also parents. Our lives are complicated. Affordable tuition makes it possible for students to get the degrees they need to start their careers.

Today, I am on my way to earning my associate's degree in nursing and plan to transfer to earn my bachelor's degree in nursing. I am on track to graduate in December of 2026, and I hope to attend the University of Maryland Global Campus. My goal is to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist. I want to give back to this community by serving patients right here in Montgomery County.

Montgomery College has provided me with more than an education. Through its faculty, resources, and clinical preparation, it has given me the foundation to succeed and the confidence to pursue my long-term goals.

I respectfully ask for your continued support of Montgomery College, the place that has given me direction and put me on the path to my career in healthcare.

Please fully fund Montgomery College's operating budget. With your support, MC will continue to have affordable tuition, which is so important for students to reach their dreams.

Thank you for your time, your support, and your commitment to this community and to Montgomery College.

Because of you, MC will continue to transform lives.