

Testimony

Victoria Baldassano

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Montgomery County Council

FY24 Operating Budget Hearing

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Good evening. My name is Victoria Baldassano, and I am the Director of the Part-Time Faculty Union, SEIU Local 500, at Montgomery College. In 2007 I organized a grassroots campaign that led to the formation of our union in 2010. I have played numerous leadership roles in the union, including as its first president and most recently as its current director. This fall 2023 I will celebrate 18 years of teaching English as a part-time professor at the Takoma Park Silver Spring Campus. I live in District 4 of Silver Spring, about three miles from the campus.

I am here tonight to ask the Montgomery County Council to fully fund the College's FY 2024 operating budget request of \$345.1 million and to reject the \$2.9 million reduction to the College's capital budget. As you know, Montgomery College plays an important role in our community by providing postsecondary educational services as well as workforce development courses and job training to our diverse student body.

MC has over 900 part-time faculty on its three campuses who play a key role in carrying out the college's mission. We teach many of the core courses students are required to take for graduation and transition to a four-year institution. We are the tutors and coaches that students turn to for extra support. We also serve on committees and in college governance.

Our students deserve high quality, affordable college education, and MC's faculty members deserve wage increases that help us do the demanding job of teaching. If we are to reach broader sectors of our community, building new well-equipped facilities and expanding through projects such as the East County Education Center must continue.

Thank you so much for your continued support of Montgomery College, its students, its faculty and staff, and its mission.