

**DEBBIE MICHAELS
PO BOX 1611
WESTMINSTER, MD 21158**

Testimony

HB 641 – Collective Bargaining-Chancellor of the University System of Maryland-Negotiations
Support

I have worked at UMBC as support staff for twelve years and have served as a representative on our bargaining team. I request your support for HB641.

We are here today asking the committee to enable us to bargain with the entity that sets the rules and controls our pay – the University System of Maryland and the Board of Regents.

Presently we have no formal, mandatory bargaining relationship with them. This is a problem, because the actions they take regarding wages, benefits and working conditions render our bargaining rights moot. Let me give you just one example:

Annually, the USM does a wage analysis based on “market conditions.” This is done without any coordination or input from our union. USM then unilaterally decides whether to give modest wage increases to exempt and non-exempt employees in alternating years, based on “market conditions.”

What’s curious is that their “analysis” has made campus job opportunities uncompetitive for certain skilled trades (electricians and HVAC, for example) and IT jobs. Specifically at UMBC we have had standing vacancies in facilities management’s electrical shop, central plant and the plumbing shop. By refusing to negotiate about the pay scale, we are unable to fill these critical highly skilled positions. The result? Our campuses and students are left without the staff needed to maintain them.

All we are asking for is that all unionized higher education employees be able to bargain with the people who actually make the decisions about wages, hours and working conditions, just like state employees.

Sincerely,

Debbie Michaels
President, AFSCME Local 1459
University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)