



**Hearing Testimony February 26, 2020
Senate Budget and Tax Committee
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC**

Senate Bill 192 – Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2020

OPPOSE

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 working people in the region. Our union represents the support staff at the Montgomery County Public School system, Family Child Care Providers, Faculty members at institutions of higher education, staff at non-profits and many other working people. SEIU Local 500 strongly opposes SB 192 – House Reconciliation and Financing Act.

Our nation’s community colleges are known as “democracy’s colleges.” They were formed on the premise of both equal access to higher education for all socio-economic groups and a vision to educate and engage students on democracy itself. This is goal that, I believe, can be shared by elected officials on both sides of the political aisle. BRFA’s proposed cuts to Maryland’s Community Colleges would be a devastating blow to an already financially stressed system. SEIU Local 500 urges the state to continue using the CADE Funding Formula and we implore you to ensure that the state lives up to its side of the agreement and fully fund CADE by FY23.

According to the Penn Graduate School of Education Institute for Research on Higher Education, in 2020, 69% of jobs in Maryland will require an associate’s degree or higher.¹ The benefits of community colleges extend beyond preparing students for the 21st century job market. Community colleges contribute to the state economy and have lasting social benefits. According to the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, Maryland’s community colleges added \$992.6 million in income to the state FY 2016. Maryland also benefited from social savings related to reduced crime, lower welfare and unemployment, and increased health and well-being across the state.²

Maryland’s community colleges are successful in large part due to the excellent teaching skills, scholarship and professionalism brought to the classroom by the community college faculty – both part-time (adjuncts) and full-time. However, these faculty have increasingly been bearing the brunt of cuts and underfunding of our community colleges. Educators in Maryland’s community colleges

¹ https://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/irhe/affordability_diagnosis/Maryland_Affordability2016.pdf

² https://mdacc.org/wp-content/uploads/MACC_MainReport_1516_Final.pdf

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12 Taft Court, Rockville, MD 20850
301-740-7100 www.seiu500.org
Pia Morrison, President**



provide high quality education to their students and are dedicated to the communities they serve despite facing low pay, instability and under-resourced working conditions.

Adjunct faculty, who are 70% of the faculty in Maryland's community colleges, face particular challenges.³ Adjuncts face inequitable compensation and receive no healthcare benefits or retirement contributions. They are considered temporary employees even if they teach every semester for 20 years or more. They often work on multiple campuses to make ends meet. This means they are not as available as they would like to be to meet with students, interact with faculty colleagues, or engage with the academic community. They sometimes have to rely on public assistance such as unemployment insurance. Many adjunct faculty are burdened with student debt from qualifications they earned in order to teach at community colleges. A survey that I carried out at Local 500 in 2015, showed that only 19% of the adjuncts teaching in Maryland's community colleges had a full-time job elsewhere and 33% said that they relied on teaching as an adjunct as their sole or primary source of income. Under-funding of our community colleges leaves adjunct faculty behind as they strive to educate their students so those students and their communities can achieve a brighter future.

Public higher education at the community college level is a vital investment in our state's economy and society with proven long-lasting benefits that both Democrats and Republicans can support. No-one should be left behind, particularly the educators whose work makes public higher education work. That is why I urge you to fully fund state aid to Maryland's community colleges this year and for years to come and oppose SB 192.

³ Data from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds>

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Pia Morrison, President