

Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

Feb. 8, 2021

Dear members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am an Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Howard Community College, living in Columbia (District 13). I **support** the freedom of employees to decide if they wish to engage in collective bargaining. House Bill 894 is simply extending the same basic rights as our colleagues at four-year institutes, K-12 education, and even Montgomery Community College.

My support stems from reasoning bolstered by personal experience. I was far more fortunate than most instructors, because I began my teaching career with a full-time position immediately out of graduate school. It was soon apparent that my path was an exception and that colleges often use adjunct faculty as a commodity regardless of an employee's experience. The students' experience is degraded as unreliable part-time gigs provide poor incentives for potential teachers, and make time investments impractical for adjunct faculty.

House Bill 894's intent is explicit, shared by all involved, and described in the proposed section 16-702 to "...PROMOTE HARMONIOUS AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM..." because our instructors' working conditions are our students' learning conditions.

The effectiveness of an organization in achieving a mission rests upon the incentives and behaviors of the members of that organization. It is clear to me that the driving incentives for faculty is the lifetime success of our students, and the behaviors exhibited by faculty align with the best outcomes for our students. On a weekly basis I see instructors reaching out to students to assist at all hours of the night, acting as tech support and counselors to students new to college. Simultaneously they stimulate deeper thought on how we know, not just what we know to develop the critical thinking required of our citizens for a functioning democracy. Collective bargaining is a way to minimize the distractions that pull faculty away from the shared outcome of student success.

I ask you to vote yes on HB 894 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.

Sincerely,
Brendan Diamond, PhD
Associate Professor Physics/Astronomy