

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland House of Delegates
Before the House Appropriations Committee
Testimony by Rebecca Johns-Hackett, Professor and Faculty at Baltimore City Community College
HB 374 – Collective Bargaining – Baltimore City Community College – Faculty**

SUPPORT

Good morning Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and members of the House Appropriations Committee.

My name is Rebecca Johns-Hackett, and I am a professor at Baltimore City Community College, where I teach History. I have been teaching History since 1989 at the University of Maryland at Baltimore County but I left that college to raise my children. In 2005 I joined the faculty at Baltimore City Community College where I have taught History for 16 years. I am here today to ask for your support to HB 374, which is legislation that will enable faculty at Baltimore City Community College to vote on whether or not they would like to engage in collective bargaining with the administration for terms that govern their working conditions.

Growing up on the Eastern Shore of Maryland but now a resident of Baltimore for over 30 years I am connected to both communities and have shared my experiences with my students. When they visit the legacy video piece of my historic community at the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Museum they will see me give commentary as their teacher at Baltimore City Community College. When they utilize the app for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway Tour they hear my voice as they travel through Historic Jonestown, my ancestral home. When my students do community service projects they provide service to Maryland Food Bank, Our Daily Bread and the Perring Loch Covenant Community in Baltimore, Maryland. This covenant community is where I also serve as an ambassador to my college as I guide my students who many are residents of and join in their service to our communities. I served as President of this Covenant Community as well as its governing body the Greater Northwood Covenant Association in the past. I am instrumental in assisting this community navigate with their respective constituents to assure a state of the art 21st century school, namely Northwood Elementary School. I am also an Archivist for Historic St. James Episcopal Church, the first African Episcopal Church in Maryland and a Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner for the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland.

Coming from diverse backgrounds, my students know first hand how community involvement changes things and I model this behavior with my students everyday as they learn the inner working of history as it applies to their everyday life. To know our past is how we can navigate our future. Baltimore City Community College through its Office of Student Life has done tremendous work in offering students a voice through their student government clubs. I am an advisor to two of these clubs namely, The History Club I founded and the Anthropology and Sociology Club founded by my colleague. The college has provided a platform for them to learn about their history from all over the world and to be privy to workshops on the Constitution, ranging from trips to the Smithsonian Museums to legislative sessions in Annapolis as well as Juneteenth Celebrations.

Faculty at the college have somewhat of a voice through our Faculty Senate which has pushed for more shared governance which is much needed now more than ever. We had challenges prior to Covid-19 and they still exist today in order to have fair wages, improved working conditions and a place at the table prior to a Faculty contract being issued for revision.

This bill, if passed and enacted into law, would simply allow the faculty at our college to choose to engage in collective bargaining with our administration on wages, benefits, and other conditions of employment. Maryland as a state has a long-standing tradition of permitting employees in the public sector to utilize collective bargaining as a route to ensure democracy within the workplace, stipulating that both management and employees work on negotiating a contract that is in the best interests of the institution in which they work. And collective bargaining does indeed work to make our institutions stronger. I note that staff at Baltimore City Community College have already been granted this right of engaging the administration in Collective Bargaining, and have enjoyed this right since the early 2000s. The faculty, adjuncts, and staff at Montgomery College have enjoyed the right to choose collective bargaining since the late 70s. All we are asking is that the legislature grant the faculty here at BCCC the same rights enjoyed by staff at our school, and faculty at Montgomery College. I ask for a favorable report of HB 374.

Thank you.

Rebecca Johns-Hackett
Associate Professor of History
Baltimore City Community College