



February 16, 2021

Delegate Maggie McIntosh, Chair  
Room 121  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify on HB 486 – Collective Bargaining. As in my testimony, I am writing to you today in my capacity as former United States Secretary of Education and as the founder of Strong Future Maryland.

During my testimony I mentioned that this legislation will (1) establish a fair collective bargaining process for Maryland's higher education employees that gives people in the same job the same opportunities to succeed across the University System of Maryland; (2) address the history of inequitable treatment for employees at Maryland's Historically Black Colleges and Universities; and (3) reduce administrative red tape and costs by replacing 15 separate negotiations with a single contract.

Having testified at the House and Senate hearings on this bill, I want to specifically address two issues raised by opponents. First, opponents suggested that a single system-wide contract would be administratively unworkable and prevent individual campuses from fulfilling their missions. In fact, the University of California, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Hawaii, and Connecticut (outside of UConn) higher education systems have successfully negotiated and implemented system-wide contracts with AFSCME.

Second, opponents suggested that moving to a system-wide contract could somehow jeopardize the accreditation of USM member institutions, particularly University of Maryland College Park. In fact, the accreditor for University of Maryland College Park, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation, is the accreditor for institutions within the New York and Pennsylvania higher education systems that are part of AFSCME system-wide contracts. Institutions with system-wide AFSCME collective bargaining agreements have

consistently met the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Standard VII (3c) which states: "The Chief Executive has the authority and autonomy required to fulfill the responsibilities of the position, including developing and implementing institutional plans, staffing the organization, identifying and allocating resources, and directing the institution toward attaining the goals and objectives set forth in its mission." Therefore, the concerns raised by USM institutions that a system-wide collective bargaining agreement would affect their accreditation are unwarranted.

Thank you for considering this additional input, and I hope that you will move favorably this important legislation. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information or answer other questions from your committee regarding HB 486 or other policy issues.

Sincerely,

Dr. John B. King, Jr.  
10th U.S. Secretary of Education (Obama Administration)  
Founder, Strong Future Maryland

Cc: Speaker Adrienne Jones