

**Testimony in Support of HB894  
Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining  
February 10, 2021**

**To:** Hon. Maggie McIntosh, Chair, and members of the House Appropriations Committee  
**From:** Michael Wilson, Executive Assistant to the President  
United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 400

Chairman McIntosh and members of the House Appropriations Committee, I appreciate the chance to share my testimony on behalf of our over 10,000 members in Maryland, working on the front lines of the ongoing pandemic in grocery, retail, food distribution, law enforcement, and health care.

**We strongly support HB 894 and urge you to vote it favorably.** Maryland’s community colleges have been an amazing resource for our members and their families to further their educations in a cost-effective way, often while remaining on the job to support themselves and their families. For this resource to remain strong and effective, it is essential that the people working at community colleges have a voice on the job through collective bargaining.

Our members know the benefits to both them and their employers of collective bargaining. Workers having a voice on the job means they can speak up when they see problems, suggest improvements without fear of being ignored or retaliated against, and act when there are dangerous situations impacting safety and health. The ongoing pandemic has made having this kind of a voice on the job that much more critical. Our members, on the front lines every day through this crisis, will be better served by a community college system where workers have the same opportunities to speak up that they do.

Like everyone, our members are anxious for things to get back to “normal” and this pandemic to be over. Unfortunately, no one knows when that will be, but even while it continues, we can learn valuable lessons from our experience over the last nearly 11 months of crisis. One of those lessons is that workplaces function better and the safety and health of everyone in a workplace, from the employees themselves, to management, to customers, or in this case, students, is improved when workers can speak up without fear. The only way to make that a reality and improve our community colleges as we hopefully emerge from this crisis, and for the long term, is by giving workers a voice through collective bargaining.

To make sure all Marylanders have a voice on the job, and that we are healthy and safe, we urge you to vote favorably on HB 894. Thank you.