

02/08/2021

House Bill 894 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

SUPPORT

My name is Kathy Sage. I am an adjunct professor teaching at Anne Arundel Community College in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. I support House Bill 894 for the purpose of securing collective bargaining rights for community college employees.

As an educator, I have two Master's degrees, two advanced education diplomas, and over 20 years of teaching experience. However, an adjunct does not enjoy the same equal right protection as those who are on the tenured track. Adjuncts are part of the academic workforce who provide valuable instruction for their students just as those employees who enjoy secure employment. Adjuncts, just as qualified, should be recognized for the dignity of their labor, and not labeled as anything less than those with more secured positions. Adjuncts deserve the right to decide to participate in a union, the right to voice concerns, the right of a stable job, and the right of representation. Adjuncts should not be denied this right.

The Covid-19 pandemic forced all classes to be online. I made a choice not to teach virtually because of the English language course I teach, knowing it would not be effective. Second language learners need to be up close and personal to hear the repetitive correct sounds in order to hear tone and pronunciation. Technology can often muffle or interfere with this transmission. Having been on hiatus since the pandemic, adjuncts are left with the insecurity of not knowing they will have a job when the pandemic is over. Union representation can alleviate this undue anxiety. Collective bargaining can help strengthen the role of adjuncts as a community force. We need to know that we have job security, that we are safe and that we have a healthy environment in which to teach. Better contract provisions for adjuncts also contribute to better learning conditions for students.

Many of my adjunct colleagues have worked tirelessly for the past seven years in an effort to pass a collective bargaining bill that will ensure equitable rights for fair and just contracts concerning wages, work hours, conditions of employment and other pertinent issues. This important legislation is long overdue. It is urgently needed to keep Maryland's Community Colleges sustainable into the future in the changing landscape of college education.

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

In Solidarity,

Kathy Sage

Adjunct Professor