

Date 02/08/2021

House Bill 894 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

SUPPORT

Dear members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Nicole Clem. I am an adjunct professor of English to speakers of other languages at Prince George's Community College, and I support House Bill 894, The Maryland Community College Employees Freedom to Collectively Bargain Act of 2021. Community college faculty should not be excluded from the basic right to collectively bargain that so many other public employees in our state enjoy. With this right, community college faculty will be better poised to advocate for the kinds of higher education changes that Maryland needs to recover from COVID-19. This is because our working conditions are our students' learning conditions.

Adjuncts in particular need more advanced notice about which courses they will teach each semester. Right now, I do not know until, at most, four days before the first day of class whether or not my course will run. The earlier I can start lesson planning, the better my lessons will be and the better my students' learning outcomes will be, too.

Adjuncts need more formal opportunities to collaborate with adjuncts and full-time faculty in their departments. We ask our students to join clubs and make friends during their college experience to build social supports that will help them get through their courses and connect them to jobs after graduation. Adjuncts need this type of social support too, for our own professional development, but also so we can be informed about the college's services and draw students into campus life.

Adjuncts need to be included in conversations about policies and programs that affect them and their students. During the summer, colleges required faculty to take training in how to use PGCC's online learning management system (LMS) without asking us exactly what type of training we needed. The training was too little, too late. I had already figured out how to operate the LMS in the spring. What I needed were best practices for delivering content online.

This legislation needs to be passed this year to help our communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no good reason to exclude community college faculty from the collective bargaining rights that most other public employees have. It is time to change this injustice and prepare our communities to rebuild our economy. **I ask you to vote yes on HB 894 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.**