

02/08/2021

House Bill 894 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

SUPPORT

Dear members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Linda Neuman. I've been an adjunct professor in the English Language Learning department at Anne Arundel Community College for eight years. I support bill HB894 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining because, like other public sector employees in Maryland, I deserve the right to decide for myself whether I want to be represented by a union. This is a fundamental right that over 200,000 other public sector workers enjoy, and community college employees should not be excluded from this basic right.

COVID-19 forced us to migrate to online teaching, which is extremely challenging for my international (ESL) students. They no longer have the safe physical environment they need to learn not only academic content but also essential cultural norms of working together in the U.S. Maximizing student success has meant creating a whole new paradigm for virtual ESL, involving training and research. AACC since March 2020 has constantly changed decisions about how to run our online courses. This has resulted in countless hours of uncompensated extra work for teachers and unnecessary stress for students because these changes have been made without consulting teachers about their efficacy. We are only told what to change, not why the change is necessary. That is not the way to decide what is best for students.

Having the right to collective bargaining would enable me and my colleagues to have input in such decisions so that we can assist in optimizing our students' chances of success. It would also provide the job security college adjuncts currently do not have, which the pandemic has only worsened. Our working conditions are the students' learning conditions; if we have to continually search for additional teaching appointments at other institutions, none of which provides job security, the students and schools will ultimately pay the price.

In this critical time, passing this legislation and allowing community college adjuncts a seat at the table has never been more necessary. This legislation will make Maryland's community colleges stronger, and will build Maryland back better after this pandemic is over.

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

In solidarity,

Linda Neuman
Adjunct Professor, AACC
ELL 317/ESL 380