

02/06/2021

House Bill 894—Education-Community Colleges-Collective Bargaining

SUPPORT

Dear Chairperson McIntosh and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Mitchell Tropin. I am executive vice president of SEIU Local 500. I also am a Montgomery College adjunct professor, teaching in Takoma Park. I urge this panel to wholeheartedly support HR 894. This measure will give adjunct faculty and staff at Maryland community colleges the same fundamental collective bargaining rights that all other state employees enjoy.

Only Montgomery College adjuncts and staff can organize. That ability enables MC part-time faculty and staff to enjoy better pay and working conditions than their colleagues at Maryland's 13 other two year colleges. I have taught at non-union colleges and the difference in the working environments is night and day.

Why is this bill necessary? Of the many reasons, the most compelling one is the issue of social justice. Over 200,000 state employees have collective bargaining rights, yet an estimated 15,000 employees are denied those same rights for no good reason. These employees have no voice at their community colleges.

These hard working instructors and staffers at those schools are trying to give Maryland adults the tools and skills they need to enjoy a good middle class life. Yet they must deal with poor pay, inadequate working conditions and no job security from semester to semester. This bill represents a compromise that ensures granting collective bargaining rights does not impose a financial burden on our two year colleges.

Having a union at MC means that my colleagues and I have a seat at the table in determining our work conditions. We meet with senior MC administrators to discuss the issues that matter to part-timers. Having effective shared governance means MC instructors have "skin in the game" and give their all so the college does its best in educating its citizens and prepares them to contribute to our economy. All community colleges should operate this way and that's why adjuncts need a seat at the table. We need collective bargaining rights now.

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

In solidarity,
Mitchell Tropin
SEIU Local 500 & Montgomery College Part Time Faculty Union