

February 8, 2021

RE: House Bill 894-Education-Community Colleges-Collective Bargaining

SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Jonn Mack, and I am a full time Professor at Prince George's Community College. I am a fervent supporter of HB894 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining. Having been a Union Member (Prince George's County Professional Fire Fighters and Paramedics Association Local 1619 retired) since April of 1999 I see the benefits of collective bargaining. I would hope that you would see that those who are educators in Maryland should enjoy the same ability to bargain as 200,000 public sector employees including many who work as firefighters, paramedic, police officers, and K-12 educators.

During the last year like all businesses, community colleges had some tough times. Professors have had to change our teaching styles rapidly without much training. We had to restructure our classes and our schedules to ensure that we are serving our students who are immensely stressed, and now are facing a pandemic for the first time in five generations. This pandemic has stressed every aspect of interpersonal relationships, and changed our educational philosophies forever.

Like many, we in higher education are now working from home. Due to our lack of separation between work and home, we are finding that many of us (who were already working 60+ hours a week) are now exceeding those hours due to increased responsibilities, mandatory trainings, and professional developments for online education. With the increased hours and responsibilities, there has been no discussion about the mental health of employees or how to ensure that we are not on the verge of burnout.

This year is even more important than ever to pass legislation. Some schools are working to implement changes to faculty contracts from the viewpoint of administration without discussion or negotiation from the professors that will be directly impacted. Our police force, administrative assistants and maintenance workers have the ability to have a say in their contracts and as an educator in the same workplace we should have a say over our contracts as well. We as educators need this bill to pass. I ask you to vote yes on HB 894 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.