

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 746

**Maryland Community College Employees– Freedom to Collectively Bargain Act
of 2021**

To: Hon. Guzzone, Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee

**From: Gino Renne, President, UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO, International Vice
President, UFCW Local 1994**

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The members of Local 1994 MCGEO support **SB 746 – Maryland Community College Employees – Freedom to Collectively Bargain Act of 2021**. Local 1994 members work in public services in Montgomery County, Prince George’s County and in other areas of Maryland. Strong public services are the foundation of strong, stable communities and often serve our most vulnerable and needy populations. Our members fight to provide quality services to the people they assist and can feel confident when they advocate to improve their workplace and to improve the services they provide, they have the power of their collective voice behind their advocacy.

Public community colleges similarly serve to bolster our communities as a cost-effective path to higher education, but their workforces aren’t all similarly situated to advocate for the students they serve. While there are a few community colleges in Maryland that grant collective bargaining rights to its employees, those rights are not codified in law throughout Maryland. Faculty could have no say in the health and safety decisions made in their workplaces, even during this pandemic. They often don’t have office space to meet with their students. They don’t have clear paths to promotion or career development. These employees’ working conditions are also students’ learning conditions. When employees can bargain collectively with their administrations, faculty, staff, and students will all benefit.

President John F Kennedy said, "Our labor unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages shortened hours and provided supplemental benefits. Through **collective bargaining** and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor." 200,000 public sector workers in the state of Maryland have collective bargaining rights. It's past time that community colleges staff have that same fundamental right. On behalf of the 8,000 members of Local 1994 MCGEO, I ask for a favorable report on SB 746.

Thank you.