

March 4, 2021

**Senate Bill 746 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining
SUPPORT**

Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am Dr. Anthony G. Pitts, and I am an adjunct professor at Prince George's Community College (Largo, MD) and I support bill SB746 to extend collective bargaining rights to faculty at Maryland's community colleges. In my capacity as an educator at PGCC, I am unconditionally devoted and driven to meeting the complex and diverse needs of my scholars, planning and delivering germane, real-world instruction, and evaluating the efficacy of my pedagogical leadership on my scholar's academic performance and growth. Additionally, it is equally important that I conference with my students on a regular basis to meet not only their individual academic needs but also to build authentic relationships that resolve in trust, empowerment, and safety. Outside of my instructional duties, I am engaged in regular department meetings, teacher evaluations, and conferences. Though these duties are expectant in my role as an adjunct professor, the need for adjunct professionals like me to raise the bar for equitable treatment and respect means that adjunct professionals must have a purposeful seat at the table to have our voices heard and needs met.

As tenure track positions in many universities and colleges across this country dissipate or see reductions in courses or hours, the reliance or contingency on adjunct professors increases. Research shows that adjunct professorships make up between fifty to seventy percent of college faculty teaching positions in universities or colleges. As a result, colleges and universities along with state legislators must build and sustain authentic, impactful, and measurable policies driven by partnerships that focus on the development and success of our students first. Next, there must be a focus on equity and empowerment for adjunct faculty. Adjuncts across the state of Maryland (as well as across the country) struggle to make ends meet per paltry wages, little to no benefits, no contracts or job security, and no voice in the governance relegated to the policies that affect us the most. These factors, therefore, do not in any way underscore the convenient rhetoric that we in this country or in our great state shout from the rooftops year in and year out that we value education and its teachers. Quite frankly, it is the opposite. I have learned in my profession over the past 28 years that when you value something, you take care of it. Consequently, adjuncts across this state are coming together to make sure that our legislators understand that we are key to the infrastructural security of our schools. Without our presence, expertise, and knowledge, many of our schools/students in the state will befall shortages in instructional personnel over the course of time. These shortages will imperil the mission and vision of the school and eventually cause student enrollments to drop, cancellation of real-world courses/classes, and diminished reputation due to lack of qualified, quality professors. According to a 2018 article by Edwards and Tolley in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "an overreliance on poorly paid and unsupported part-time faculty may hurt student retention and achievement." The results of this scenario are simple: Our students suffer because their socio-educational needs are sacrificed. Our students deserve better! Our adjuncts deserve better! Our schools deserve better! Our communities deserve better! Our workforces deserve better! Our families deserve better!

Therefore, I am submitting my name in support of adjunct professionals and faculty councils across the state in support of legislation policies that promote and foster professional equity and empowerment within our colleges and universities. Through strong and effective collective bargaining measures, adjuncts and legislators must come to the table as decision makers who truly advocate for the development and implementation for policies that improve the professional livelihoods of adjunct professionals. Thereby, the security of our students, schools, and communities will benefit greatly due to

teachers who are highly valued for their professionalism. If not, our state colleges and universities risk making the same mistakes in the past where cost cutting caused many schools to rely heavily on adjunct professionals. Unfortunately, this decision led, at many of these institutions, to worsening working conditions for tenure-track faculty in the form of growing teaching loads, a lack of administrative support, and diminishing funds for research. Again, the movement to create and implement collective bargaining or unionizing among adjuncts across our state is central to strengthening the working conditions of a coalition of professionals who engage with the future of our state and country daily. Therefore, I urge you to vote “yes” on SB 746 and strongly request a favorable committee report.

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony G. Pitts