

March 4, 2021

Senate Bill 746 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

SUPPORT

Dear members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Dr. Deborah Kent and I am Professor of Music at Howard Community College in Columbia MD. I support senate bill SB746 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining.

Without Collective Bargaining we have no input into the terms and conditions of our contracts or our working conditions. With Collective Bargaining there is the opportunity to be a part of negotiating job related issues such as job security, compensation, professional development funds, annual appointments, rank advancement and tenure, health and wellness, and the development of secure adjunct positions, something I believe should have been done years ago. With this bill, there would be a place at the table of Joint Labor Management Committees with clout rather than nominal representation. This bill does not mandate a union or union membership, we would be able to exercise our right to choose whether to join a union or not. If we have learned anything from the COVID pandemic, it's that all workers need to have a say in their workplace.

In the last year, we have all undergone overwhelming challenges to our lives because of COVID-19. We in the education field have been able, for the most part, to adapt to the needs of our students but it has not been without a great deal of sacrifice. That sacrifice has been on many fronts, including additional financial expense to fund needed equipment, giving hour after hour for emergency training, having to take the extra time needed for setting up and operating our classes online, all the while juggling the needs of our families and personal lives. Both full-time and adjunct faculty members have been expected to fulfill all these needs, without guarantee that there would be a position for them in this new climate. I can assure you that without *all* our faculty, especially the most vulnerable to job instability, the adjuncts, we would be forced to shut down many of our learning pathways, thus making educational goals unattainable for many of our students. I can also assure you that faculty and staff know best what our students need to succeed.

I do not know of a single colleague, full or part-time, who is not fully committed to our students. It is time for us to get the kind of supportive working conditions that other professionals have.

I ask you to vote yes on SB 746 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.

Sincerely,

Deborah Kent