

**Hearing Testimony March 4, 2021**  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
**Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CtW, CLC**

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

**SUPPORT**

SEIU Local 500, which is made up of over 20,000 working people in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia. Our union represents the support staff of Montgomery County Public Schools, family child care providers, adjunct faculty at several Maryland colleges and universities, staff at non-profits, and working people across our region. Many of our members are on the front lines of public education in Maryland, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why today we submit this testimony in favor of Senate Bill 746.

Senate Bill 746, known as *The Maryland Community College Employees Freedom to Collectively Bargain Act of 2021*, would grant to employees at our state’s community colleges the equal right to collectively bargain. Currently, approximately 200,000 public sector workers in Maryland have the right to collectively bargain, including staff and instructors at K-12 schools, as well as professors and staff at colleges and universities. That employees at community colleges would be excluded from collective bargaining is an oddity and injustice. Across our state, the record is clear: when Marylanders bargain collectively with their employers, compromises are made, employees’ needs are met, and institutions run smoothly.

Within our community colleges, the record is equally clear. Employees at Montgomery College have been unionized for over a decade. In that time, employees have been able to have their needs at work met, without raising the cost of attendance. In fact, several other Maryland community colleges have exceeded Montgomery College in their cost of attendance within this time and Montgomery College attendees enjoyed the slowest tuition rate growth in the state for several consecutive years. Across Maryland’s public sector and within its community colleges, collective bargaining yields positive outcomes for employees, leads to compromises between employers and employees, and can help institutions’ relationships with its employees run more smoothly.

Senate Bill 746 is essential for Maryland community college employees who need a voice on campus, during COVID, during the post-pandemic recovery, and beyond. We therefore ask for your support for SB 746 and strongly urge a favorable committee report. Thank you each for your dedication to fairness and justice, and to the working people of our state – and thank you for considering this testimony.

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