

FINANCE COMMITTEE

March 2, 2021

TESTIMONY

Submitted by

Dr. Maureen Murphy, President

SB746 Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

Position: Oppose

My name is Dr. Maureen Murphy, and I serve as the president of the College of Southern Maryland. Today, I am testifying in opposition to SB746. While there are several objections to the existing bill as presented, I'd like to address the sheer number of unions overall, and more specifically the proposed faculty union.

Six bargaining units, as proposed, is excessive, and at small or medium-sized colleges, can result in very small unions. The proposed unions also create divisions among employees that are contrary to current college cultures.

I also oppose the formation of faculty unions. We value our faculty: their expertise, their commitment, and their continued development. Our faculty hold the same credentials as university faculty; however, they choose community college careers because they believe in our mission: to serve the underserved and create opportunities for those who would not otherwise have them. Indeed, community colleges are social justice through education.

As such, community college faculty should have parity with university faculty. Their professional status is equal, and it seems unreasonable that SB746 suggests they need a union when faculty from the University System of Maryland are allowed to Meet and Confer. Our faculty should be accorded the same respect.

SB746 also allows for an adjunct issue; however, there needs to be definition. Adjunct faculty are part-time, which allows colleges to bring in occasional experts when needed and to accommodate the vicissitudes of open admission enrollment. While some adjunct faculty are trying to piece together full-time work, many others desire to be part-time, and teach perhaps one or two classes annually. Montgomery College defines adjunct as an individual who taught a minimum of 9 credit hours in the previous year and is scheduled to teach a minimum of 9 credits in the following year, which seems reasonable.

Additionally, I question why SB746 should happen now, when all of us are trying to rebuild from the significant disruptions of the global pandemic. Disrupting yet one more system keeps our colleges from focusing on our students, whose families are experiencing unprecedented levels of job loss, food insecurity, and technology challenges.

I urge an unfavorable report on SB746.