

March 4, 2021

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

Dear members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Kirt Ways. Currently I am employed as an ESOL teacher for Prince George's County Public Schools. In addition to that, I work as an adjunct ESL teacher for Anne Arundel Community College and Prince George's Community College. I fully support bill SB746 Education Community Colleges Collective Bargaining. It is time for the adjunct college community to decide for itself that it wants to be represented by a union. There are too many highly educated, experienced, and skilled adjuncts that are struggling to make ends meet. Many of these educators have higher level degrees in their respective fields as well. This is a fundamental right that over 200,000 other public sector workers enjoy, and community college employees should not be denied the basic right.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused me to lose a significant number of hours at both colleges. Classes that I normally have taught for years were suddenly and unfortunately canceled or taken by full time professors in order to complete their course load. I believe that adjuncts need the ability to negotiate their salaries and health benefits as well. As I previously mentioned, a significant number of adjuncts not only hold higher degrees, but have a plethora of experience as well. Community colleges could not function if not for adjunct professors. The time has come to give them benefits that they have rightfully earned.

Adjunct community college professors have painfully endured subpar working conditions for a very long time. Now, it is time for those conditions to be not only fully addressed, but resolved as well. This is the year to pass legislation that gives adjunct community college professors a seat at the table. The pandemic that we are all suffering through has further put a wedge between what adjunct community college professors should rightfully have and what they don't. This legislation is most certainly needed to keep Maryland's Community Colleges operating safely and continuing to repair the damage caused by the pandemic as well as the lack of collective bargaining rights for Maryland's Community College Adjuncts.

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

In Solidarity,

Kirt Ways, Certified K-12 ESOL Teacher
MS Adult Learning (specialization ESL to Adults)

Adjunct Professor, Anne Arundel Community College

Prince George's Community College