

March 4, 2021

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

Dear members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Peggy Yates, I worked for four years as an adjunct professor, five years as a full-time faculty member and in 2019, received promotion to Full Professor in the Humanities Department at Prince George's Community College in Largo, Maryland. I enthusiastically support bill SB746 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining. I believe faculty at Maryland community colleges deserve the right to decide for themselves whether they want to be represented by a union. Having been a longstanding member of Actors Equity and Screen Actors Guild, I know very well the benefits of union membership. It will ensure fairness, safety in the workplace and much needed support in many other areas. The faculty at Prince George's Community College not only need, but deserve to be represented by a union. 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.

COVID-19 has had a huge impact, not just on my work, but on my students as well. I talk to and see my students several times a week. I hear what they are going through. It's preposterous to me that the administration does not value the first-hand knowledge faculty have of their students experience. The administration continually disregards the insight faculty have into the needs of the students at PGCC. But this problem extends beyond the devastating impact of this pandemic. This refusal to give faculty a seat at the table routinely negatively impacts the student body. I hear the frustrations and the anger and disappointment my students experience when they struggle to get through the "front door" of PGCC. Every semester I start my classes with a discussion about the experience my students have had with getting started. Every semester I hear the same complaints about how hard it is to do the simplest things, from registering for class to getting correct information from advisors, to accessing financial aid and dealing with multiple conflicting administrative voices. Why would faculty NOT have a seat at the table, a voice in the decisions that directly impact the students they see multiple times a week? It's ludicrous. There is a reason PGCC has, shall we say, a "questionable" reputation. The operations and organizational aspect of the college ignores and undervalues the concerns and experiences and knowledge that faculty could and would love to bring to the table if they had a voice that would be heard in support of the experience their students are having every day at PGCC.

We deserve a seat at the table NOW. The students deserve us to be at the table. We will make a difference in the experience they are having and the impact it would have on their education and their future in the workplace and in their communities. I believe the reputation of PGCC would benefit as well! This legislation is needed to keep Maryland's Community Colleges running safely, effectively and building Maryland back better after this pandemic is over. **I ask you to vote yes on SB 746 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.**

Sincerely,

Peggy Yates