

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony in support of SB-813. Esteemed senators, my name is Karen Bridges and I am a Howard County resident, mother of two former HCC students, professor & chair of physical sciences at HCC, and a second year Community College Presidents' Initiative fellow. I have been at HCC since 2010.

Every year, all HCC faculty and staff complete required training that's critical for remaining an informed member of the HCC community. I'm required to complete a minimum number of additional professional development hours as well: to keep my pedagogy informed, to update my understanding of available technological resources, and to learn from my colleagues across the college.

Having attended many HCC BOT meetings in the last few years, I have been surprised to observe a lack of scrutiny of the data presented by our leadership to the board of trustees. I have witnessed the blatant misrepresentation of the status of some college initiatives, and no one on the board asked a follow up question or requested testimony from anyone executing the new initiatives.

When our internal QUEST survey was abruptly changed to a non-anonymous internal survey, only one BOT member questioned the logic of doing so. He has since resigned. I have never seen a single board member question a budget item, and at the last board meeting, with **no public discussion**, the board approved an expenditure of over \$7.5 million to replace all employees in the Human Resources department with a private consulting firm based in Florida. Longtime employees, taxpaying Maryland residents, were released from their duties in what appeared to be a mass firing only a day after this expense was approved.

My point is not to diminish the important role of our board in college operations, but rather to ensure all trustees are required to complete ongoing training to refresh their understanding of their roles as gatekeepers for taxpayer investment in HCC, as overseers for the operations of the college, and as **critical** evaluators of college data, expenditures, and initiatives.

Finally, regarding the current faculty union contract negotiations, I can think of no meaningful reason why administrators or faculty would object to furnishing our board with updates on the status of these negotiations. As it stands, bargaining has been going on for just over a year with little progress, and accountability to the board from the faculty union and our self-described pro-union administration would keep everyone on track.

Recently, our administration has been talking about voluntarily incorporating some of the proposed amendments into practice. I interpret this as meaning they support the bill as well; however, as of now, I have not seen any official implementation of the amendments. I can only interpret that as showing the administration needs official guidelines like this bill will provide.

Thank you for your time and attention. I appreciate the opportunity allowing me to express my support for SB-813 with amendments.

