

To Whom it May Concern:

The hardest part of my job is when I have to say 'Goodbye.'

My name is Dr. Lane Schwager and I am a proud faculty member at Montgomery College, in Rockville. Montgomery College is an incredible place to work. I spend my workday pouring my energy into my students, collaborating with my colleagues, and working to provide accessible education to my community in Montgomery County. It is everything I dreamt for. However, it can be a very stressful job too. The day before I sat down to submit this testimony, I taught three classes, answered emails, prepped for a peer evaluation for a colleague, submitted paperwork to our office, and most importantly, I spent my office hours with a transgender student comforting them as they navigate our complicated world while we worked on an assignment together. Immediately following their visit, I met with another student, who is undocumented, who just needed a little support and a safe place to vent their frustrations and worries.

I am able to support my students, to guide them through their education, and find new ways to be a creative and innovative teacher because *my needs*, as an employee are protected by my Union, MC-AAUP/ AFT Chapter.

I do not have worry if my next check will bounce. I do not have to spend hours begging my Department Chair to approve inflation matched pay raises. I do not have negotiate for time-off, or bereavement, or sick leave. I do not have to worry if my disability accommodations will be honored by the college. I do not have to worry about being forced to do more than my capacity. My union supports me, so I can support my students.

After speaking with a few of my colleagues and friends who teach for the incredible four-year institutions of higher education in the state of Maryland, I was shocked to know that they are not afforded the same level of protection.

I am writing in full support of SB0750 so that my colleagues can have the same level of confidence, protection, and support that I receive at Montgomery College through my union. By passing this bill, this legislative body has the opportunity to allow faculty to work together to protect their lives as *employees*, so they can focus on the role we all love the most; being *educators*.

Every May, under a tent in the growing heat of Summer, I watch my students walk the stage. I meet their families, take photos, and I say 'Goodbye'. Nearly all of my students transfer to a four-year-institution in Maryland. My hope is that the faculty that greet them on the other side of Summer have the same sense of security that I am grateful for every day.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lane Schwager', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lane Schwager, Ph.D.
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MC-AAUP, AFT