



SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 4, 2021
Testimony Opposing SB 746
Dr. Clifford Coppersmith, President

SB 746 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining
Position: Unfavorable

Community Colleges across the state of Maryland are facing many new challenges as we negotiate the COVID-19 pandemic, its attendant economic devastation and the continuing challenges we were already facing to serve the students and communities of our respective regions. Maryland’s community colleges will be the foundation for recovery as our counties and communities rebuild from this major national health and economic disaster. The time is simply not right for the implementation of this legislation that, if passed without revisions, will have an added negative impact on the most important population we serve – our students.

The historic underfunding of Maryland’s community colleges and repeated failure to fully fund the community college system under the Cade Formula has left an accumulated statewide deficit of \$140 million. This means that our local counties and, even more critically, our students have been left paying the majority of the cost of providing the critical education and training that is the primary mission of community colleges. If this state mandate is emplaced the significant costs it will impose will mean that students and local governments will have to fund the resultant increase in costs to maintain budgets and operations.

If the intent of the state legislature is to promote harmonious and cooperative relationships with public employees and if this legislation is passed the following revisions must be considered to lessen the impact on our students and our local governments:

1. Legislation for collective bargaining at the local level should require the approval of local county governments.
2. The current maximum allowance for as many as six bargaining units must be reduced to three.
3. The definition of part-time faculty must be more reasonable.
4. Implementation of the legislation must be delayed until 2024 to allow a reasonable time for preparation of college administrators to manage the process.
5. Provision must be made for the costs and time of training college officers in the various aspects of collective bargaining and organization.

There are many other provisions that should be reviewed as part of the process for revising this legislation to minimize its impact on the very people we serve as a community college system. I urge our representatives and senators to consider the recommendations of my colleagues across the Maryland community college system and from the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) that will improve this legislation and fundamentally lessen its negative impacts on our students.