



February 17, 2021

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 894 - Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 894 - Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining. This important Bill recognizes that our community college employees should have the freedom to join a union if they choose. By establishing collective bargaining rights for certain community college employees, the General Assembly will take an important step forward in improving the quality of life for our hard working community college employees.

Our community colleges fulfill a critical role in our higher education system. These institutions provide continuing education, life enrichment classes, and are key economic development partners providing practical job skills training that help ensure our local businesses have a highly trained and a qualified workforce.

More than 14,000 faculty and staff members at four community colleges in Maryland already have access to this option. House Bill 894 would expand this bargaining power to the state's remaining community colleges. Passage of this Bill would provide faculty and staff the choice to join 100,000 K-12 instructors and 60,000 state employees who are already able to negotiate terms and conditions of their employment. We know that when employees have a voice on the job it results in greater success of the institution.

As County Executive, my experience negotiating with police officers, firefighters, and other public employees with collective bargaining rights has been positive. In fact, we have found that even when budgets are tight, we have been able to resolve issues large and small, both economic and non-economic, by negotiating in good faith with organized employees. When workers have a seat at the table, organizations run more smoothly and efficiently.

As we look forward to a post-COVID Maryland, we must recognize the central role our community colleges will play. They already provide an affordable education to many Marylanders, and they will no doubt be the source of professional retraining for workers who need a fresh start in the new economy. For so many Maryland workers, our community colleges will be the lifeline they need to recover after COVID. Ensuring that instructors and staff can collectively bargain will be essential to the smooth operations of community colleges in this



M A R Y L A N D

County Executive Steuart Pittman

rapidly evolving environment. Educators and student-facing staff bring to the table first-hand knowledge that administrators need to make informed decisions about the future of their institutions, both during COVID and beyond.

Not only do I appreciate the value and efficiency that comes from collective bargaining, but it has become more clear since COVID began that workers need to have a seat at the table.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 894.

Sincerely,

Steuart Pittman
County Executive