

Mar. 4, 2021

House Bill 746 – Education – Community Colleges – Collective Bargaining

SUPPORT

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Jake Muirhead and I am an adjunct professor in Visual Art at Anne Arundel Community College and Montgomery Community College. I am writing to express my firm and enthusiastic support for bill SB 746 because adjunct instructors deserve the fundamental right to have a say in their working conditions here in Maryland. This right is guaranteed to over 200,000 other public sector employees across the state and it is long overdue that community college adjuncts be afforded the same rights.

I have taught at MC for 15 years and AACC for about 8 years so I have many years of experience as an adjunct at both schools. I was at MC when we voted to form a union and have seen, firsthand, the material benefits collective bargaining has brought to me and my colleagues. And while I certainly appreciate these quantifiable advancements, I also believe that the union has helped to improve the overall experience for all faculty and students in many ways that are less easy to quantify. It has improved communication between the administration and part time faculty as well as facilitating better and closer working relations between the part time and full time faculty. The union has begun to address fundamental issues of fairness, trust and support within the college's organizational hierarchy. We certainly have not solved every problem or overcome every challenge but union representation has fostered a more open, inclusive and cooperative working environment for all educators and administration at MC. And I know this helps all of us on the front lines to be better teachers.

I love teaching and the events of the past year have only strengthened my belief in the overall mission of Community Colleges. The events of the past year have also taught us that we, as a society must get busy addressing fundamental inequities within our society. We need to openly and honestly discuss (and even disagree) how best to face these challenges. But we absolutely must allow all voices to be heard and we must allow everyone a seat at the table. That is what is at the core of the issue before you; full representation for all, freedom of choice and participatory democracy. This is the America I believe in.

I trust you also believe in these guiding principles and I trust that you will do the right thing and support SB 746.

Sincerely,

Jake Muirhead

Adjunct Professor, AACC and MC