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Testimony

SB 746 – Education – Community College – Collective Bargaining Support

AFSCME Maryland Council 67 **SUPPORTS** SB746 which authorizes employees at all of the Community Colleges across Maryland the opportunity to form, join, and participate in employee organizing and other activities related to collective bargaining. The bill strikes a proper balance between an employee's rights to organize, while ensuring that everyone in the bargaining unit has a vote on determining whether to participate.

AFSCME Council 67 knows that employees that are allowed to organize are associated with higher productivity, lower employee turnover, improved workplace communication, and a better-trained workforce. Obviously, these items represent benefits for the employer as well. In addition, employers see increased morale, more invested employees and greater safety in the work place. Studies show that the presence of unions increases the degree of safety at a workplace, according to the AFL-CIO. In the study, American Rights at Work, by Baugher and Roberts, "Only one factor effectively moves workers who are in subordinate positions to actively cope with hazards: membership in an independent labor union." This is because union members have a voice to address job hazards as well as a voice to cope with job stressors.

AFSCME Council 67 would also like to stress that allowing employees the right to collective bargaining has brought about many of the benefits that most employees, public and private, take for granted. The list of benefits is long, but here are a few to keep in mind; weekends, lunch breaks, paid vacation, FMLA, sick leave, social security, minimum wage, 40-hour work week, overtime, child labor laws, occupational safety and health act (OSHA), worker's compensation, veteran's employment and services (VETS), pensions, unemployment insurance, equal pay acts of 1965 and 2011, etc. Without the rights to collective bargaining, many of these protections may have never materialized for the American worker.

AFSCME Council 67 strongly supports SB 746 and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.