



House Bill 507

Community Colleges and Local Governments – Use of Public Funds to Influence Collective Bargaining Rights - Prohibition

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 14, 2017

From: Kevin Kinnally & Barbara Zektick

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 507. This bill would prohibit public officials and employees of a local government, as well as a community college, from knowingly using public funds to influence collective bargaining rights.

MACo believes this bill is overly broad and could have unintended consequences for local government officials. Local government officials are immersed in the community; they often attend public forums and events where they are subject to broad citizen and stakeholder input. Under the bill, a local government official or employee could inadvertently violate the law by discussing collective bargaining rights with their constituents and fellow citizens in a public setting.

Local government officials serve at the pleasure of their constituents. MACo believes that a free and open dialogue between local representatives and the communities they serve is a key cornerstone of good local governance. HB 507, while well intentioned, could undermine this communication structure, and create a cloud of uncertainty over a wide range of actions when public officials discuss labor-related matters.

This bill is overly broad and could have unintended and unwelcome consequences on local government employees and officials. For these reasons, MACo requests the Committee give an **UNFAVORABLE** report for HB 507.