MARYLAND Association of COUNTIES

House Bill 966

Education - Community Colleges - Collective Bargaining

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

Date: March 10, 2015

To: House Appropriations Committee

From: Robin J. Clark

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 966. This bill would establish a uniform statewide collective bargaining process for community college employees.

Counties oppose the one-size-fits-all approach of HB 966, which limits local decision-making. The move to collective bargaining outlined in this bill could create potentially unsustainable costs for counties, who necessarily provide substantial funding for community colleges throughout Maryland. In addition, despite counties' role in supporting community colleges, this legislation would not provide any opportunity for county governments to participate in collective bargaining negotiations. The combination of these effects – State-imposed system and costs, no county participation in bargaining, and no additional State funding – results in a potentially substantial unfunded mandate on county governments.

Current law allows for county governments to establish collective bargaining processes for community colleges within their jurisdictions. Baltimore, Prince George's, and Montgomery Counties have collective bargaining at their community colleges, all established through this local "opt-in" mechanism. This legislation would repeal those systems and require a more detailed and restrictive collective bargaining process in all community colleges.

As counties struggle to recover from a weak economy and State cutbacks, adding administrative and personnel costs only aggravates funding challenges. This year presents many budget challenges, and the Governor's budget plan to restrain the State funding formula for community colleges depletes the very resources that would be necessary to sustain proposals such as this. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** HB 966 and recommends the Committee issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

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