



House Bill 490

Education - Community Colleges - Collective Bargaining

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: House Appropriations

Date: February 11, 2014

From: Robin J. Clark and Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 490. This bill would establish a uniform statewide collective bargaining process for community college employees.

Counties oppose the one-size-fits-all approach of HB 490, 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. Even this year, the Governor's budget plan actively restrains the State funding formula for community colleges, depleting the very resources necessary to help sustain proposals such as this. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** HB 490 and recommends the Committee issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report.