

Legislation Text

File #: 190277, **Version:** 0

Urging the Community College of Philadelphia's administration, faculty, and support staff to quickly resolve their contract dispute to ensure the best possible education for their students.

WHEREAS, For the past three years, contract negotiations have stagnated between the Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) administration and the union which represents 1,200 CCP faculty and support staff. In the meantime, the faculty and staff have been working in accordance with the terms of a contract which expired in August 2016; and

WHEREAS, In late March, over 90% of the union's members voted in favor of allowing their leaders to call a strike as soon as the first week of April. Negotiations subsequently revived and have stretched long hours, with concerns about preserving affordability for students balanced with disagreements about health insurance contributions, faculty workload, and salary increases; and

WHEREAS, The threat of the union's first strike since 2007 looms over the negotiations; and

WHEREAS, Should a strike occur, the administration has stated it will try to keep classes in session. However, if not enough faculty were to report, the school may have no choice but to close for the duration of the strike. This would have a broad and deep impact on students who are mere weeks from graduation; and

WHEREAS, CCP administrators have warned faculty and staff that if they go on strike, state law prohibits CCP from providing any compensation to striking employees, including pay and healthcare benefits. Striking employees could instead elect to pay for coverage under a federal law known as the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, or COBRA; and

WHEREAS, Exacerbating these issues is the fact that the City does not pay its fair share to support CCP's budget. When the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania founded community colleges in 1963, it mandated equal funding from three sources: the Commonwealth, the City, and the students. The City has not met its mandatory minimum appropriations to CCP for many years, resulting in an outsized financial burden on students. This lack of investment further curtails CCP's ability to provide a quality environment for its students, faculty, and staff; and

WHEREAS, Bill No. 190212, introduced March 21, 2019, would transfer \$19.25 million from the City's General Fund to CCP to bridge the gap between the City's current contributions and its mandatory minimum appropriations to CCP; and

WHEREAS, For the sake of Philadelphia students, communities, and businesses, CCP must be preserved as a

low-cost, high-quality educational institution. Out of concern for existing students, a strike should be avoided via a fair contract which balances the needs of the students who depend on CCP and the faculty and staff upon whom CCP depends to drive educational attainment and economic opportunities throughout the City; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the Community College of Philadelphia's administration, faculty, and support staff to quickly resolve their contract dispute to ensure the best possible education for their students.