



**Testimony of MTA President Merrie Najimy  
in support of S.1732/H.2723**

*An Act to provide fair working conditions for public higher education adjunct faculty*

**Joint Committee on Public Service**

**October 19, 2021**

- Thank you, Chairman Brady, Chairman Gordon and the members of the committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify this morning. My name is Merrie Najimy and I'm the president of the Massachusetts Teachers Association.
- I come before you today to voice my strong support for Senate 1732 and House 2723 *An Act to provide fair working conditions for public higher education adjunct faculty*.
- The MTA represents approximately 18,000 members working throughout our public higher education system including, including adjunct faculty.
- Adjuncts have always been an important part of our public higher education system, but in recent years, as the state has stepped away from its funding obligations to public higher education, our campuses have come to heavily rely on adjunct faculty. This is especially true at our community colleges, where adjuncts teach up to 70 percent of the courses. Yet these adjunct faculty members are paid far less than their full-time counterparts and are denied access to basic benefits, even when carrying full course loads.
- The many adjunct faculty members who are teaching multiple courses cannot, and should not, be likened to gig-economy workers, as they are making it possible for our public colleges and universities to meet the needs of students and our communities.
- But because public colleges and universities have not changed the working conditions to meet the changing role of adjuncts, the state has created an unjustly exploited workforce, one that is playing a vital role in

maintaining the quality of life in our Commonwealth. It is long past the time to correct this unconscionable practice.

- Adjuncts help educate some of the poorest and most vulnerable populations in our state, and their work is critical to helping bring economic and social justice to communities of color. Yet adjuncts themselves have been denied basic state employee benefits and protections, such as employer-sponsored health insurance, retirement security and comparable pay for comparable work. The pandemic has increased the importance of correcting these injustices, which must be corrected now.
- Workplace justice for adjuncts is not an extraordinary ask. We simply want basic rights and benefits that every worker should have available to them extended to our adjuncts. They demonstrate their value again and again, and it is time that they are treated with respect and fairness.
- For these reasons I urge you to quickly report this legislation with a favorable recommendation – our adjunct faculty cannot afford to wait any longer for action.
- I would also ask that you report favorably Senate 1683 and House 2623, which enhance the economic security and health care protections for our dedicated public-sector retirees.
- Thank you for your time.