

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

Martin T. Meehan, J.D., President
University of Massachusetts
1 Beacon St Floor 31
Boston, MA 02108

BY FIRST CLASS MAIL AND BY EMAIL

Dear President Meehan,

UMass employees across the system have been through a lot over the past few years, including furloughs, layoffs, and other disruptions. The health and well-being of our members – your employees – has been a topic of renewed importance since the early days of the pandemic. Unfortunately, the latest move by your office and several of the campuses to outsource family and medical (FMLA) leave approvals to a private, for-profit, third-party company shows a disregard for the well-being of those workers, from maintainers to tenured faculty.

FMLA leaves come during stressful times in an employee’s life, when they are ill, expecting a child, or caring for a family member. These are times when UMass should offer more, not less support. Outsourcing the management of this important benefit and right to an off-campus, for-profit company raises concerns about the quality of support employees will receive, especially since that company advertises its ability to decrease absenteeism rather than provide necessary leave for employees facing significant family and health concerns. It also diminishes an important area of the employer/employee relationship, substituting an opportunity for engagement with a faceless intermediary. The lack of accountability and connection of such an entity to our campus community also spurs concerns about the security and integrity of employees' private medical and personal information.

The supposed costs that would be saved by this move come at a significant price. It will be paid by employees through added layers of faceless bureaucracy when personal support is what they need. It will be paid by our campus community through the deterioration of the employee/employer relationship. And it will be paid by the students and taxpayers of the Commonwealth as public funds are shifted to private corporations instead of public employees and campus resources.

Our UMass unions are standing united together, along with our members, against this move to privatize FMLA leave administration. This is a bad choice for your employees, for your campuses, and for the public good. We hope that you will rethink this decision and work with the unions to support our human resource departments and ensure that we have robust, on-campus, personal support for family and medical leaves for all employees going forward.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Caroline L. Coscia
223E4011DF6C4DC...
Caroline L. Coscia, President
Faculty Staff Union/MTA, UMB

DocuSigned by:
Henry Cornu
48DB05F60B09464...
Henry Cornu, President
Maintenance & Trades Unit/MTA, UML

DocuSigned by:
Le'Kecia Powell-Watkins
27B74EED2F1149C...
Le'Kecia Powell-Watkins, President
NAGE Local 300, UMMS

DocuSigned by:
Thomas Estabrook
34B57D7938DA474...
Thomas Estabrook, Acting President
Grant & Contract Employees /MTA, UML

DocuSigned by:
LeeAnn Robinson
02B72E678A2846A...
Lee Ann Robinson, President
AFSCME Local 1776, UMA

DocuSigned by:
ANDREW GORRY
73EC3970A21744A...
Andrew Gorry, Co-Chair & President JEC
Professional Staff Union/MTA, UMA

DocuSigned by:
Eve Weinbaum
6751D04F081F49F...
Eve Weinbaum, Co-President
Mass. Society of Professors/MTA Amherst

DocuSigned by:
Mary Malinowski
BCD9F2D14A454DD...
Mary Malinowski, President
University Staff Association/MTA, UMA

DocuSigned by:
Grant O'Kielly
9AFA9958568B417...
Grant O'Kielly, President
UMass Faculty Fed. Local 1895/AFT, UMD

DocuSigned by:
Michael Dufresne
6B3F6AE592724B6...
Mike Dufresne, Head of Grounds, Unit B Chair
Professional Staff Union, UMA

DocuSigned by:
Alexa MacPherson
89B4BE077AB2436...
Alexa MacPherson, President
Classified Staff Union/MTA, UMB

DocuSigned by:
Judith Aquino
7C3E496BB8AA4DB...
Judith Aquino, Acting President
Classified Staff Unit/MTA, UML

DocuSigned by:
Annetta Argyres
8C7D623EE100454...
Annetta Argyres, Boston President
Professional Staff Union/MTA, UMB

DocuSigned by:
Nicholas Gula
BD28B51163EC449...
Nicholas R Gula, President
AFT Maintainers Local 6350, UMD

DocuSigned by:
Brad Turner
430D019CFB7A491...
Brad Turner, Co-Chair
Professional Staff Union/MTA, UMA

DocuSigned by:
Marc Liberatore
1DCAE22F9DE243C...
Marc Liberatore, Co-President
Mass. Society of Professors/MTA Amherst

DocuSigned by:
Sheila Gilmour
D905A912C540453...
Sheila Gilmour, Vice President
University Staff Association/MTA, UMA

DocuSigned by:
Gina Reis
E9D10FB5C8E8473...
Gina M. Reis, Chairperson
Ed. Services Unit, Faculty Fed. Local 1895, UMD

DocuSigned by:
Ellen Martins
84A6ED998631423...
Ellen Martins, President
Union of Adjunct Faculty-UAW, UML

DocuSigned by:
Jariza E. Rodriguez
4F0C716E7E914DF...
Jariza E. Rodriguez, CSU Exec. Bd Member
Classified Staff Union/MTA, UMB

DocuSigned by:
Cynthia N. Costa
F788D9751DF9422...
Cynthia N. Costa, President
AFSCME Council 93, Local 507, UMD

DocuSigned by:
Mary Elizabeth Hooker
7D27BAC04BE0481...
Mary Elizabeth Hooker, Secretary to the MSP Board
Mass. Society of Professors Lowell/MTA

cc (by email): Chancellor Mark Fuller, UMD
Chancellor Julie Chen, UML
Chancellor Javier A. Reyes, UMA
Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, UMB
Chancellor Michael F. Collins
UMass Board of Trustees
John D. Dunlap, UMass Chief Human Resources Officer
Campus Labor Relations Directors