

January 6, 2011

Dear Legislators,

I am an Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Mary Washington, where I have dedicated the past twenty years to providing Virginia's future leaders with what I believe to be the best possible education. I am proud of my work, my accomplishments, and the University of Mary Washington, and I hope to be able to continue in my position for the rest of my career.

I do not regard my position at UMW simply as a job. It is a vocation to which I committed myself because I believe the critical importance of education, and the value of geography as part of that education. I did not expect to grow wealthy as a college professor, but that is not important to me. What I did expect - as did most of my colleagues - was that I would be compensated by the Commonwealth in a manner commensurate with my qualifications, my hard work, and my job performance. Above all, I expected that I would be treated fairly, and that the Commonwealth would not renege on the commitment it made to me when I was hired. These expectations have, alas, has not been realized.

Of my 20 years at UMW, at least seven have passed with no pay raise whatsoever. If the Governor's 2011 budget is approved, my colleagues and I will experience our first *reduction* in compensation. At the same time, we are being asked to teach more students and to undertake more professional and community work. And, on top of this, our students are being forced to pay higher tuition.

This country and Commonwealth are in dire need of the best educated workforce we can possibly create. This is a time when it is critical to attract the best faculty possible to our schools and universities, and to make sure that as many young (and older) people as possible can afford a quality education. We should be increasing expenditure on public education, not cutting it.

I urge you to take up the cause of education in Virginia, and to fight for the adequate compensation and fair treatment for those of us who have committed our lives to our students' futures. Please stand up for our students and those who teach them.

I look forward to receiving your response to my message.

Sincerely,

Donald N. Rallis, Ph.D