

Delores G. Kelley, Chair  
Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 658  
Supporting

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Brice Bowrey and I am a graduate student at the University of Maryland – College Park. I am writing to you to express my support for SB 658. I believe that this bill, and the collective bargaining that it enables, is the surest way to improve the quality of life of graduate students. Furthermore, I believe SB 658 will ensure that graduate students are adequately and fairly compensated for the services, skills, and work that they provide to the University of Maryland system. In my opinion, graduate students are as essential to the functioning of the University as professors, administrators, or any other members of the faculty and staff. However, graduate students are often unable to financially support themselves as they pursue their studies. The cost of living in the DMV area is high and rising, while salaries and other forms of compensation have remained the same or declined. Thus, many graduate students are forced to work multiple jobs or extreme hours in order to stay afloat.

I believe that this situation is untenable. The conditions under which graduate students currently work negatively impact the undergraduate students of the University of Maryland system by diminishing graduate teaching assistant's ability to provide quality education and academic support. Furthermore, without sufficient time and financial means, graduate students cannot conduct the research which will improve the community and the nation in the years to come. History shows that collective bargaining is one of the surest ways to improve working conditions in a fair and mutually beneficial manner. Thus, I urge you to support SB 658 and grant graduate students the right to negotiate for adequate compensation and fair working conditions.

Sincerely,

Brice Bowrey  
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Graduate Fellow  
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