

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,

As a faculty member in the Computer Science department at the University of Maryland, College Park, I know that graduate students are the **most important resource** of the university. Without my graduate teaching assistants, I could not manage the large courses that enable the CS department to serve our increasing population of majors. Without my graduate research assistants, I could not conduct the research that advances new knowledge, brings in grant funding, and maintains the university's international reputation.

As valued employees, they deserve basic rights and guarantees, including the right to collectively bargain. As such, I want to voice my strongest support for SB658. Graduate assistants should be paid a living wage, but **currently they are paid considerably less than is needed in our high-cost-of-living area**. Graduate assistants should be allowed to maintain reasonable working hours and should be compensated fairly for the hours they work. They deserve the right to fight and collectively bargain for better wages and working conditions.

Only when graduate students know that their rights are protected, and that they will be paid and treated fairly, will they truly be able to achieve their best work in their critical teaching and research roles on our campus. As such, allowing them to collectively bargain and to fight for their rights is not only the ethically correct choice, but also the practically correct choice, to maintain and increase the long-term strength of the university. I strongly urge you to recognize the basic rights of these valuable employees and support SB658.

Sincerely,

Michelle Mazurek, PhD
Assistant Professor
Computer Science Department, University of Maryland
5236 Iribe Center, College Park, MD 20742
mmazurek@gmail.com