

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 Florian Gawehns. I am a first/year PhD student in the government and politics program at UMD. I am also a teaching assistant like many others who have provided testimony to this committee.

Many of us are not paid a living wage. It is hard to commit to a full-time graduate program while not having the means to support yourself financially. Since we are expected to produce professional quality work, we should be compensated accordingly. If Maryland wants to stay an attractive destination for the next generation of scientists then it should take a stand and support any improvement in the working conditions of graduate students. Maryland is a beacon of hope in a dysfunctional and polarized national political environment. It should signal its willingness to support higher education by all means necessary.

Arguments against unionization do not hold water. Recent research suggests that unionization neither negatively affects academic freedom nor harms faculty-student relationships. Unionization is an important instrument to improve the conditions for young scholars and provide graduate students with a voice in our working conditions and in the future of work on campus.

I urge you to support SB 658, a bill that will give us the right to collectively bargain.

Sincerely,

Florian Gawehns, M.A.  
PhD student Government & Politics  
Teaching Assistant  
8109 Garland Ave, Unit 6, MD-20912  
fgawehns@umd.edu