

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

By Joshua Davis

HB 275

**State Personnel – Collective Bargaining – Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and
Graduate Assistants**

February 14, 2023

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee. My name is Joshua Davis and I'm an associate professor of history at the University of Baltimore, a state university for working adults of all ages that has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a predominantly Black institution. I've taught at UBalt for eight years.

I'm also a member of our university's chapter of the American Association of University Professors. Our AAUP chapter at UBalt recently voted strongly in favor of House Bill 275, as did AAUP chapters at Towson, College Park, Bowie, and Salisbury and state chapters of the American Federation of Teachers and AFL-CIO, the SEIU Local 500 DC-MD, the United Auto Workers, and the UMD Graduate Student Government.

I'm testifying to respectfully ask that this committee issue a favorable report to HB 275.

To anyone having doubts about supporting this bill, I'd ask the following: K-12 teachers can do collective bargaining in this state, and so can non-faculty staff at state universities as well as community college faculty. So why are USM faculty denied the right of collective bargaining? How can anyone who claims to support workers and to support education in Maryland not trust our university faculty to responsibly exercise the right of collective bargaining?

In his recent State of the Union address, President Biden stressed our responsibility to revive the dignity of work in our country by protecting workers' right to unionize. This is what this bill would do, if passed. For those opposing this bill, I would ask, why aren't you willing to provide University System of Maryland faculty the dignity and respect that we deserve as state workers?

At the University of Baltimore, I'm proud to report that many of our undergraduates go on to pursue fulfilling careers in K-12 public education. We've had at least four alums of

our History program become teachers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County public schools directly after graduation in the last five years.

One major reason I'm happy to encourage our students to pursue K-12 teaching is because our public school educators in Maryland belong to unions with collective bargaining rights. It's this feature of public school employment that makes teaching in Maryland much more appealing to college graduates than teaching in states like West Virginia, where teachers are prohibited from collective bargaining.

Sadly, the lack of collective bargaining for USM faculty is a chief reason why I'm less inclined to encourage our graduates to pursue faculty teaching jobs in our state university system. Unlike neighboring state university systems in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Washington, D.C., our USM faculty are barred from collective bargaining.

This strikes me as not only unfair, but also short sighted. Our state is losing out on talented graduate students and university faculty to neighboring states where the university systems allow collective bargaining. Faculty and graduate students want the protections of union membership, as a wave of recent unionization drives on college campuses such as Johns Hopkins University and Northwestern University illustrate.

I suspect that most of you support the right of our K-12 teachers to do collective bargaining, and that you also supported the Kirwin bill because you wanted to strengthen our state's public education system. If passed, HB 275 would have a similar positive effect on public education in Maryland by improving our universities' ability to attract faculty who can boost our state's university system, in turn helping to keep it one of the best in the country.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask that your committee issue a favorable report to HB 275, because university faculty and graduate assistants, like all other state workers, deserve the right of collective bargaining.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Joshua Davis
University of Baltimore