

SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 275
State Personnel – Collective Bargaining – Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
February 14, 2023

Thank you, members of the Appropriations committee, for your consideration of **HB275, which would extend collective bargaining rights to adjunct faculty and graduate assistants at institutions within the University of System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland.** My name is Lauren Siegel, and I am an Adjunct Faculty member and a graduate of at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, where I have taught for seven years. **I support HB275 to strengthen and include current adjunct faculty and graduate assistants, whose work is essential to the core teaching and research functions of our public universities.**

Adjunct Faculty at the University of Maryland are grossly underpaid. Someone working full time (teaching 3-4 classes per semester) cannot live on the income they earn in this position as it is too low. Adjunct faculty also are ineligible to receive health insurance from the University. I recently applied for health insurance on the Maryland Health Exchange. **When I told the staff person my income, she said that I was eligible for Medicaid.** This is a shameful phenomenon for the hardworking Adjunct Faculty and graduate students.

Our current policies and procedures need to be updated, modernized, and inclusive. HB275 would provide the mechanism for these desperately needed changes. In their previous statements on this issue, university administrators have praised the “meet and confer” process, which is available to graduate assistants – but not to adjunct faculty. If graduate students and adjunct faculty members feel that their needs are being heard and met by university leaders, there will little reason for them to organize to actualize their right to collectively bargain. **HB275 not only provides graduate assistants and adjunct faculty the ability to sit across the table and speak with university administrators; it will encourage these administrators to listen and respond to their needs.**

With HB275, Maryland will join many other universities both locally and nationally to extend collective bargaining rights – including at the University of Michigan, the University of Illinois, and the University of California. The protections and voice that such rights provide only strengthen the university's teaching, research, and community.

I strongly urge a favorable vote on HB275, and greatly appreciate your time, thoughtfulness, and consideration.

Lauren Siegel, LCSW-C
lauren.siegel@ssw.umaryland.edu