

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Lasair M Ni Chochlain, Graduate Assistant
HB 275**

**State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants
February 14, 2023**

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I am a disabled student who in the last year has involved myself in disability advocacy at the University of Maryland, and I can tell you that graduate students NEED collective bargaining rights to secure fair and reasonable disability support. Right now, what is offered by the Accessibility and Disability Services as the university isn't even on par with other Big 10 institutions. The university needs to allocate more funds for disability services and support to make them available at low or no cost for graduate students, and efforts to make them do that have failed without CBR. Not only that, but COVID response is a huge disability justice issue. The University of Maryland has failed to continue the N95 mask mandate that was extremely popular with graduate assistants, especially teaching assistants who have to come in contact with large numbers of undergrad students every week. Many graduate assistants (and faculty and staff) either have health conditions that put them at greater risk or live/work closely with someone who does. Collective bargaining rights would help us ensure that UMD continues to provide free tests and masks throughout the pandemic, and ensure that those suffering from Long Covid have the resources and support they need to stay at their roles and continue to make progress.

Sincerely,
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