

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Janelle Wong, Professor, UMCP
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 Janelle Wong and I am a Professor at the University of Maryland, where I have worked for more than a decade. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to HB 275.

I am a joint appointment in three different units - Government and Politics, American Studies and Asian American Studies. I serve as Director of Asian American Studies. This semester I am teaching two courses, attending department meetings in two departments and one program, serving on multiple graduate student committees, serving on multiple department and college-level committees, writing letters of recommendation for students and colleagues, and supervising three faculty and two full-time staff. I am also committed to a full research agenda, developing and fielding surveys on the political attitudes and behaviors of multiple racial groups, conducted in an array of languages (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese). This is all to say I am fully-invested in the mission of the University of Maryland.

Serving our state and students at the University of Maryland, College Park has been the highlight of my career after teaching at Seattle University, the University of Southern California, and Yale University. And yet I am convinced that the University of Maryland can even be stronger with the right to collective bargaining.

Research has shown that collective bargaining can enhance the relationship between the administration and graduate students or faculty members by creating clearer and more transparent lines of communication. It also promotes equity and supports democratic decision-making.

And, I am particularly troubled by the working conditions of the Professional Track Faculty. These instructional faculty are expected to teach a full course load of 4-4, double the workload of tenure-track faculty. Additionally, there are nearly 900 part-time instructors at the University of Maryland who often earn less than \$5,000 for a 16-week course and work at multiple campuses. Regrettably, university policies related to appointments and contracts are not properly enforced and are enforced inconsistently across departments, leading to potential violations. Collective-bargaining is an important tool for all of us to improve the working conditions of Professional Track Faculty.

Our public education institutions, including the University of Maryland, serve as critical examples of democratic governance. The right to collective bargaining has long been recognized not only as a fundamental human right, but it has also been seen as the best way to ensure that employee voices play a role in shaping workplace conditions. This right has been granted to many other public higher education institutions in the country, as well as many private, prestigious institutions in our state. There is no valid reason to exempt four-year public institutions from this path. ***I again therefore call for a favorable report to HB 275.***