

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Dr. Sarah Fouts, Assistant Professor
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 House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Sarah Fouts and I am an assistant professor in the Department of American Studies at UMBC where I have worked for 4.5 years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to HB 275 to grant collective bargaining rights to faculty, part-time faculty, and graduate students.

Passing HB 275 will improve faculty retention. This bill will improve wages, better benefits, and create safer workplaces. It will have a positive impact on retaining faculty which is an issue that we face at UMBC. This bill will also help protect the rights of contingent faculty which is integral to ensuring job security and fostering more equitable access to resources. Collective bargaining is the best way to get job security.

The bill will ensure that we all have a seat at the table and a voice in setting the terms and conditions of our employment. Collective bargaining increases communication between faculty and administrators and increases transparency within the institution by allowing for more democratic negotiation and decision-making processes. Doing so will also provide clearer channels and mechanisms for the fair resolution of workplace disputes.

The bill will also improve the educational environment for students by allowing faculty to set limits on class size, address school health and safety issues, and give faculty more input in their professional development. These steps all foster a thriving student-centered environment.

The state already grants this right towards nearly every other state employee, as well as the faculty at our community colleges and the non-academic workforce at our 4-year institutions. This right should be extended to the rest of higher education in Maryland.

I again therefore call for a favorable report to HB 275.