

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Bayley Marquez, Assistant Professor
Department of American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park**

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 Bayley J. Marquez and I am an assistant professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for 3 and a half years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to SB 247. 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. It is clear that this right should be extended to the rest of higher education in Maryland.

As a tenure track professor my job entails research, teaching, supervising graduate and undergraduate student research, and service to the university. I teach two classes per semester in the areas of Native American studies and Ethnic studies which are areas that students have a great interest in and which we are in great need of more faculty to teach across the university. This particularly concerns me in relation to the fact that the overall number of full-time faculty rose 3.1% from 2014 to 2022; while undergraduate enrollment rose 16% and the number of tenure track faculty in particular fell 6.9% during that time. In our department we are often struggling to have enough full-time tenure track faculty to cover the many courses our students wish to take. This means that a great deal of the teaching load is supplemented by graduate student instructors and professional track faculty. The number of non-tenure track faculty has risen 19.3% across the university in the same timeframe. These faculty are often subject to working conditions that are far more precarious than tenure track faculty. They are also often overworked and have fewer avenues for redress of issues they face in the workplace because they may fear losing their job is less secure than a tenured position. Graduate student instructors are also overworked with as many as 36% working over the 20 hours per week that their contracts stipulate. The implementation of both rules and policies around graduate student work hours and protections from harassment and discrimination are not consistent for graduate students placing them in a precarious position. Thus, the instructors that are filling in the gaps to the universities lack of tenure track hiring are facing precarious work conditions which they have very little redress for. Graduate student and faculty unionization would provide an avenue to address these issues. As a tenure track faculty I feel it is necessary to support the rights of workers across all levels of the university or else the primary mission of our institution, teaching, will be greatly impacted by the disparities that different types of instructors face in the workplace.

I also support SB 247 because collective bargaining is a basic democratic right. Three states (New York, Missouri, and Hawaii) have written the right to collective bargaining into their constitution and Illinois voters passed a referendum for a constitutional amendment supporting the right to collective bargaining with 58% approval. Maryland is not a conservative right to work state and should be a leader in protecting the democratic right to collective bargaining. Additionally, research suggests that collective bargaining can strengthen relations between administrators and graduate students and faculty at academic institutions because it provides clearer lines of communication and more effective monitoring and implementation of workplace policies. Many public universities across the U.S. have collective bargaining for both faculty and graduate students and are doing well financially and continue to be premier academic institutions. One local example is Montgomery College which ranks number 7 in the nation and has long had collective bargaining rights for faculty workers.

Members of the committee, Governor Wes Moore's motto for the state of Maryland is "Leave no one behind," yet we are excluding faculty and graduate students from the rights to collective bargaining. This is a fundamental failing in terms of promoting equity and justice in our state. The right to collective bargaining has been long recognized not only as a fundamental human right, but it has also in this state been seen as the best method of ensuring that employee voices play a vital role in constructing conditions that govern our workplaces. It is a right granted to many other public higher education institutions in the country, and indeed to many private, prestigious institutions in our own state. The reasons to exempt 4-year public institutions from this path just no longer make sense and leaves too many Maryland workers behind. I again therefore call for a favorable report to HB 275.