

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee**

By Albert Nekimken

SB 247

**State Personnel – Collective Bargaining – Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate
Assistants**

February 16, 2023

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Robert Bennett, MA and I am a part-time professor at UMBC and CCBC, where I have worked for 10 and 14 years consecutively. 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. Clearly this right should extend to the rest of higher education in Maryland.

As an adjunct I teach between 5-7 classes a semester to make ends barely meet (this is more than most full-time professors teach per semester). I teach Technical Communications at UBC and Fundamentals of Communication at CCBC. I have also taught graphic design/visual arts courses at UMBC, College of Notre Dame of Maryland, MICA and Anne Arundel County Community College. Beyond the hours in the classroom, I spend 40+ hours grading work from over 100 students on average per semester. Additionally at UMBC I am a campus leader. I chair or co-chair three committees; most of this work is unpaid.

I urge you to support this bill because the system is broken and many faculty, particularly long-term adjuncts, are truly being exploited by their institutions. For example, the highest paid adjuncts at CCBC make \$1000 per credit hour (a dramatic \$20 increase from the previous tier) while a full-time assistant professor makes, with the same amount of service, about \$2666 per credit hour. While UMBC pays better, both schools limit adjuncts access to benefits or make them overly costly or difficult to obtain (no payroll deduction). Collective bargaining creates equity across the board and allows underpaid faculty to have a living wage and access to benefits; what should be a human right.

Members of the committee, this state has for decades viewed collective bargaining between state employees and management as the best way to enroot democracy in our workplaces and public education institutions. 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 ed institutions in the county, 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. I again therefore call for a favorable report to SB 247.