

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
By Dr. Heidi Scott, Faculty Assistant and Senior Lecturer**

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 Dr. Heidi Scott and I am a Faculty Assistant and Senior Lecturer at The University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked and learned for 15 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 four-year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to the rest of higher education in Maryland.

In my work at UMD as a professional-track faculty member, I've been a Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Assistant Clinical Professor, and a Faculty Assistant. Only in the first two titles have I had any chance of promotion and renewal; the other titles have been limited-term, with no renewals or promotions. I'd like to speak specifically to one situation: my time as an Assistant Clinical Professor in the vaunted University Honors Program, which I held for a 3-year limited term from 2019-2022. (The program has changed the position title to "Visiting Assistant Professor" to provide cover for their short non-renewable contracts.) Despite the lavish funding of the program, which is designed to recruit the highest-level high school graduates to UMD instead of an Ivy-league rival, the faculty have no promotion or renewal potential. We know our end date as soon as we begin, and this hopelessness kills faculty morale, the possibility of developing program culture, and leads to a lot of early attrition. There's no governance structure to include the faculty in the design and operation of the program -- all is controlled by administrative staff. While faculty are "cycled out" based on their contract expiration date, the non-teaching administrative staff have enjoyed promotions of title and pay, all while boasting of the program's success to higher-level administrators. They boast across the bent backs of their faculty, who teach some of UMD's most promising students within a toxic work environment of temporary, precarious, employment. I have been teaching continuously at the college level since I earned my Ph.D in 2009, but my experience, my teaching award, my two published books and numerous scholarly articles – none of that matters to this administrative establishment. In order to ensure my continued employment, I worked as an Adjunct instructor at American University while still working full-time for UMD.

I support SB 247 because it would give a collective voice to the nearly 4,000 professional-track faculty that UMD relies upon to teach 70% of its courses. We are experienced professionals with terminal degrees and status within our fields – but in many departments we fail to make a living wage. PTK faculty have little representation in the University Senate and in many cases

absolutely no governance role in the programs to which we've devoted years of our professional lives. As the administrative ranks bloat with more high-salary but non-teaching positions, we on the front lines of student education are left wondering whether we will have any job in the upcoming semester. Students suffer from the lack of program culture, the low morale of their instructors, and a stunning arrogance shown by the administrative staff regarding their instructors' plight.

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 education 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.