

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

By Dr. L. Suzanne Gordon

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 L. Suzanne Gordon and I am a non-Tenured/non-Tenure-Track (non-T/TT) Lecturer at the University of Maryland, where I have worked for more than a decade (and where I worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for a decade previously). 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 non-tenured, non-tenure-track faculty member, although I have worked in this role at UMD for more than a decade, I have no job security at all. Instead—like all the rest of the rest of the non-tenured and non-tenure-track faculty at UMD, which comprise 75% of its faculty—I am an “at-will” employee, as I have been at other Maryland colleges and universities where I have taught, along with teaching at UMD. This means that, however highly I am rated by my students, I can be let go at the will of the employing institution, e.g., if not enough students sign up for my classes, or for any reason at all.

Further, we non-T/TT faculty make substantially less salary than T/TT faculty. As a result, at age 76, I cannot afford to retire on my savings and teacher’s pension, though I have made full-time-work contributions to the plan for many years. So I continue to work, teaching a half-time load. At UMD, we have a food bank for students. We need one for non-T/TT faculty including Graduate Assistants as well. Enacting SB 247 would give me and other non-T/TT faculty and staff collective bargaining rights, much needed, given the inequities in employment status and salary between T/TT faculty and the rest of us at-will employees.

Members of the Committee, for decades this state has viewed collective bargaining between state employees and management as an important democratic and fundamental human right in state workplaces, including public education institutions. It has long been viewed as the best way to ensure that employee voices play a vital role in the establishment of workplace conditions. In fact, it is a right granted to many other public higher ed institutions in the county, and to many prestigious, private institutions in our state. The reasons given for exempting 4-year public institutions from the right to bargain no longer make sense. Therefore, I again call for a favorable report to SB 247.