

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
By Karyn Pomerantz, MLS, MPH**

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 Karyn Pomerantz and I am an alumna of the University of Maryland, classes 1971 and 1986, and retired public health educator and librarian at the George Washington University where I have worked for 30 years. I currently live in College Park, Maryland and attend many UMD events. 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 an educator and student advisor at GWU, I am familiar with the pressures on faculty and staff to serve the needs of our students. Our department required faculty to publish 40 articles to achieve a promotion. High numbers of students needing advice overwhelmed faculty, and our teaching assistants suffered overloads of courses and research tasks.

As a student at UMCP, I rarely had difficulty in meeting with faculty. My classes were never taught by other students. I have many friends now who are teaching 4 courses a semester as adjuncts or full-time teaching faculty while scrambling for grants. While 4 classes do not appear to be excessive when compared to high school teaching loads, they involve scores of hours to develop and many more to evaluate assignments that tend to require individual consultations. On top of this, university faculty also spend hours applying for funding, performing community service, and serving on university committees.

Several years ago, UMD facility workers were demanding respect and increased income. Housekeepers were only earning \$10 per hour while being subject to impoverished, overworked conditions, and sexual harassment. Without the right to unionize and bargain, these toxic conditions will persist for all employees. They will result in burn-out, resignations, and a lower quality of education for our students.

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.