

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
By Lining Wang, Teaching Assistant
SB 247**

**State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty,
and Graduate Assistants
February 16, 2023**

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Lining Wang and I am a member of the University of Maryland community. I am writing to express my strong support for SB247/HB275 (State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants), granting collective bargaining rights to faculty, part-time faculty, and graduate assistants at an institution within the University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, or St. Mary's College of Maryland.

This issue matters to me personally because as a graduate teaching assistant in a PhD program, and someone with a disability, the current stipend offered by UMD is woefully inadequate for the cost of living in the DC area.

Coupled with hundreds of dollars of additional medical bills each month, the financial stress has worsened my health considerably, and made it harder to justify staying in the program.

Collective bargaining would allow graduate assistants to be paid more equitably per the cost of living, reducing the day to day stress that students must manage on top of their coursework, research, and other obligations.

A PhD program is already a highly challenging and difficult endeavor; when combined with disability, having dependents, economic marginalization, and/or other circumstances that require additional time and effort to manage, it can be next to impossible.

Higher pay competitive with peer institutions in high cost of living areas would be a tangible commitment to the retention and inclusion of marginalized students that UMD supposedly espouses, instead of perpetuating cycles of discrimination.

I believe that collective bargaining is a key piece of the solution to this inequity, by giving graduate assistants power to negotiate their pay, as well as other benefits such as medical and mental health.

Graduate research assistants do the bulk of the work in academia (particularly in STEM), while graduate teaching assistants are often expected to do much of the same work as professors while not being paid commensurably.

I believe collective bargaining is the only way to create a future for research, and teaching, that is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive for everyone.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lining Wang
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