



METROPOLITAN BALTIMORE COUNCIL

AFL-CIO Unions

**SB 247 - State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and
Graduate Assistants
Senate Finance Committee
February 16, 2023**

SUPPORT

To: Hon. Meloney Griffith, Chair & members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Courtney Jenkins, President, Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO

Chairwoman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in **support** of SB 247—*State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants*. My name is Courtney Jenkins, President of the Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO—our coalition represents over 100 affiliated local unions and close to 80,000 proud active union members & retirees in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Harford, and Howard counties and Baltimore City.

With an increase in worker organizing across our state and country, it has become apparent that the right to organize in the workplace is a right that the majority of the public supports. Here in the Baltimore Metropolitan area, we have seen cultural workers at museums and libraries, video game quality control testers, and most recently graduate student workers at Johns Hopkins University seek and win recognition of their union.

The fundamental and constitutional right to organize should be extended to faculty, part-time faculty, and graduate assistants at our state's higher institutions of learning. In a time when the American public has shown a 70% approval rating for labor unions, the time is now for our state to expand and protect access to the ability to come together to form and join a union. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), requests for union elections in 2022 increased by 53%. In 2022, the state of Maryland saw one of the largest increases in workers represented by a union—with the fourth largest increase (40,000) in our nation.

SB 247 does not require or mandate faculty, part-time faculty or graduate students to form or join a union; instead the legislation would provide the ability for unorganized workers to exercise their right to form a union and collectively bargain for wages, benefits, and other working conditions if they choose to do so.

For these reasons we ask for a **favorable report on SB 247 - State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants**.

Respectfully submitted,

Courtney L. Jenkins, President