

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
By Andrew Goffin, Research 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,

affording basic necessities as a graduate assistant is a constant struggle. As a student in the Electrical & Computer Engineering department, I have a much higher stipend than others at the university, and my advisor allows me to have a good work-life balance. However, even with my current stipend it is difficult to afford living in the DC area. Those with average or below average stipends can find it nearly impossible. The massive spikes in inflation and housing costs have made recent stipend increases unable to reduce the financial burden grad assistants face. Regardless, stipend and work-life balance are highly dependent on my department, advisor, and campus of study. On an individual level, no graduate student can petition for improvements in their working conditions, especially when such issues vary wildly between departments and campuses. Such improvements can only be attained through collective bargaining.

Of course, even if graduate students decide not to unionize, we should have the ability to decide that for ourselves. We are workers and keep the wheel of academia turning through our research and teaching, and as such should have the freedom to bargain for our rights if we so choose. This bill is a necessary step to having that freedom, and I sincerely hope that the bill is passed.

Sincerely,
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