

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

**By Kimberly Anne Coles, Professor of English, The University of
Maryland 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 Kim Coles and I am a full Professor at the University of Maryland, where I have worked for 18 years. 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.

I teach two courses per semester with 25-30 students in each class. I teach one lecture course each year with 50-75. Which is to say, that I teach roughly 100-150 student per academic year. I supervise students pursuing Masters degrees in English and currently have three PhD students under my supervision. In addition, I assist with all of the administrative work of my department and university, as we all do: while not trained in administration, academics are nonetheless tasked with the running of the institution at all levels. I am a university senator, have served on the Senate Executive committee, the university Athletic Council, and numerous fellowship committees. I have, with my colleagues, helped steer the university through some of its most fraught and painful transitions, including navigating its course through the crises of the murder of Lt. Richard Collins III and the death of Jordan McNair.

None of this is easy work. But it is work in which every member of the university faculty—both tenure and professional track—and its graduate student body participates. Our efforts assure that the University of Maryland maintains its position as both an institution of higher learning and one of high moral standing. In the latter task, much work still needs to be done, and collective bargaining is a key piece in its pursuit. It largely falls to the faculty and student body to assure that the institution(s) at which we work are accessible, inclusive, diverse and humane. It largely falls to the faculty and student body to assure that the labor of each member of the communities in which we work is recognized and properly compensated. And it largely falls to the faculty and student body to assure that the administration is held accountable for the inevitable shortfalls and oversights that attend the running of a large

institution. We are, in fact, the collective body that assures that the University of Maryland earns its status as a flagship institution.

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.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Anne Coles
Professor of English
University of Maryland