

Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 658
Supporting

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

As you know, our institutions pride themselves on how they cherish democratic values: At the University of Maryland, they are emblazoned on the sides of buses and banners all across campus. However, withholding the ability for graduate workers to choose whether to be able to collectively bargain makes the case that these ideals are as valuable as the plastic they're printed on.

We are told we are lucky to have a "job we love." This is in the same vein as an artist receiving offers of "exposure" to compensate for their labor, despite the fact that exposure is also a cause of death. Like exposure, love does not pay the rent. It does not pay for expenses related to anxiety, stress, and depression--all of which are disproportionately found in graduate students¹. Simply put, an abstract satisfaction with the fruits of our labor is not an acceptable substitute for the protections that collective bargaining rights can offer us.

Lastly, this isn't a matter of us asking for charity. The value that I and my fellow graduate students create deserves fair compensation. The extensive hours that we provide in labor are critical for the functioning of the millions of dollars' worth of ongoing research projects, undergraduate classes, and labs. This is in sharp contrast with our salaries and long working hours which only guarantee that we will narrowly avoid worst-case scenarios, leaving nothing for those of us who are less fortunate or especially vulnerable.

Sincerely,

Eli Mizrachi
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¹ <https://ter.ps/mhreport2018>: UMD 2018 Physics Mental Health Survey