

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

SB 521
Supporting

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

I am writing in support of collective bargaining rights for graduate employees, and I strongly urge you to pass SB 521. As a faculty member at the University of Maryland, College Park I watch graduate student workers teach courses that are integral to the functioning of our department. Graduate student workers often teach courses on their own and are responsible for all aspects of being the instructor of record in addition to their coursework and research. Compared to the faculty who teach these courses they are not being adequately compensated for the work that they do. GAs are denied the right to bargain for salary increases even though many of them do the same work as lecturers on campus, who are considered university employees. Without the GAs in our department we would not be able to offer the number of classes we do and our undergraduate degree program would not be able to function.

Additionally, student workers need collective bargaining rights in order to be protected from exploitation in the workplace and to bargain for needed benefits. Many graduate student workers are unfairly asked to work more hours than their stated contract, which impacts their academic progress, yet they do not have the recourse of union protection. Their work benefits the university at the expense of their own studies. Graduate student workers help make the university run and deserve representation when their labor is fundamental to our ability to offer courses to undergraduates. GAs should not have to live in precarious positions, without access to needed benefits, and without the rights to bargain for these benefits when they are workers who provide the education that students pay for at the University of Maryland.

Sincerely,

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