

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,

The term "graduate student" is really a misnomer. It conjures up the idea that we simply get paid to study, get some career training done, and eventually get a free degree in the end. The reality is far different. The typically graduate student in reality spends the majority of their time teaching and/or conducting research - two pivotal roles for the University. In fact, I would argue that the University system as a whole would come crumbling down if it wasn't built on the backs of graduate students - i.e. cheap labor - fulfilling the job that are core to running a research university. In short, there would be no UM system without graduate students. Graduate students, or better yet graduate labor, deserves a seat at the table in deciding what is best for us. This power asymmetry has been further exposed thanks to COVID-19. Work has only gotten harder for us, yet the benefits have not kept up. Then again, when have they ever? It's clear that graduate students have held the University system up over the past year, not the other way around. Graduate labor teaching the classes and has adapted to the "new normal" and graduate research brings in the funding. We deserve better.

Sincerely,

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