

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,

We absolutely have the right to collectively bargain. We work at the university, we conduct funded research, we teach the UM system's students, and we do all this both in pursuit of a degree and (more importantly) as our job. This is our livelihood right now. We are paid so that we may eat, pay rent and utilities, help support families. But unlike many employees who work to accomplish these same needs, we are unable to improve our conditions when they are harmful. The right to collectively bargain is not exclusively a matter of higher pay; it is also a mechanism through which we can work with the university to protect ourselves against departments or advisers who mistreat us. When things are good for us, of course we don't feel that we need this. But when things get bad, we suddenly realize we have no substantial voice. We are at the mercy of the departments and advisers who have turned against us, and we have no one in our corner. Right now, we are forbidden from having such a voice within our workplace, the university. I strongly urge you to overturn this and grant us, as graduate workers, the right to collectively bargain. I appreciate your consideration and representation of us.

Sincerely,

Ramsey Karim
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