

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,

My name is Emery Laurel Patterson. I am a graduate assistant with the University of Maryland Library system, and I am in my final semester of the MLIS program. I am also the GA staff representative for the Library Assembly Advisory Council (LAAC) for the 2020-2021 academic year.

As a graduate assistant, I had a generally positive experience because my supervisor for most of my program, Bria Parker, was an excellent mentor. My current supervisors, who I began reporting to after Bria's departure, Sarah Hovde and Neil Manel Frau-Cortes, are both very supportive and helpful as well. This experience, however, was dependent upon the goodwill of my colleagues. I was lucky in that the people I worked with were understanding, communicative, and helpful the entire time throughout my graduate assistantship (especially during such a tumultuous time socially).

The needs of GAs are best understood by GAs, because the role tends to vary by department. As workers, we are not treated the same as faculty or staff because of the cyclical nature of the position. Communication is an area that could stand to improve for GAs, as we are often left out of the loop of projects that we are expected to work on.

Because the needs of GAs are best understood by GAs, graduate assistants need bargaining rights. They need the ability to advocate for themselves should the need arise. I am asking for the ability to voice their concerns, just as an option. It should be a tool we have access to.

Sincerely,

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