

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,

Together with President Pines and others I celebrate the high position our university (joint with UMB) achieved in the research spending rating. However, it's striking for me that Graduate Assistants in the same university earn so little compared to other GA's nationwide. According to GAAC, we have a 5000\$ cost of living deficit. I am on my first year, and I dread my first summer. I'm not allowed to search for additional funding because of comprehensive examinations. I doubt that COVID situation will be good enough for me to return home. I don't think I will be able to save enough money from my current stipend, and my visa doesn't allow me to work besides my TA-ship. My parents are not poor, but they live in another country, and their wages are below poverty threshold when translated to USD. I came to the US with the hope that I can survive on my own, but I don't see much opportunities as of now. I believe collective bargaining will allow me and other Graduate Assistants to get out of such dead-end situations and find a solution together with our university.

Sincerely,

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