

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 became a teaching assistant at the University of Maryland in the fall of 2020, amidst the current pandemic. This was a time when students, professors, and teaching assistants alike were facing the challenges of transitioning to online learning, which made the load on teaching assistants greater than usual. Prepping everything for online versus in person courses amounts to a greater strain on your time and a heavier mental load overall, as everything feels more fragmented and urgent at the same time.

Because teaching assistants are thrown directly into the fire when the University undergoes any changes, planned or otherwise, it is essential that we have the right to collectively bargain for our own interests. Otherwise, we are vital University employees who lack the right to effectively advocate for ourselves. I work an additional job on top of being a teaching assistant and graduate student working on an active research project. Graduate students should not have to choose between the financial welfare and physical and mental wellbeing. In order to have the option to make choices that work for us as important assets to the system of instruction at the University of Maryland, we need collective bargaining rights so that we can advocate and an effectively organize for the rights and privileges we need to make our lives reasonable, affordable, and workable as employees, teachers, administrators, and researchers.

Sincerely,

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