

Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 118
Supporting

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of the state of Maryland legalizing collective bargaining for graduate students within their university system. My concerns are aimed at relatively stagnant and low student wages in the context of massively inflated costs of living in the areas surrounding the university, particularly in the city of College Park. This disparity has pushed graduate students, like myself, to seek housing outside of the immediate area to be able to afford housing. This would be less of an issue if UMD-CP maintained a robust infrastructure to provide student transportation from outside the immediate College Park area, however in recent semesters (<https://dbknews.com/2021/08/31/shuttle-um-umd-commuters-gaithersburg-bus/>) the University's transit body has eroded their service to the degree of stranding students in neighboring counties. Particular to my own discretions, collective bargaining would enable graduate students to negotiate the following.

1) Higher wages commensurate with the inflated cost of living in the areas surrounding the University.

and

2) Increased funding for UMD's transportation body to enable the hiring of more bus drivers and expansion of bus routes to neighboring counties and towns not directly adjacent to the University.

Sincerely,

Kenneth McAfee
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