

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 was fortunate enough to be funded by my PI's grant for my first 2 years of graduate school and was not required to teach. In my 3rd year, I was funded by an administrative GA position, which I really loved and felt gave me insight into another side of academia. As a 4th year student, I'm now being funded as a 10-hr GA (same as my 3rd year) and 10-hr TA (I really wanted teaching experience and fought for this. I feel that my experiences have been valuable, but frankly, they do not pay enough. Throughout my 3.5 years of graduate school, I have always worked multiple side hustles to supplement my stipend even though I planned not to work during grad school. I'm in my 30's working on a PhD in a field that I'm very passionate about, but it seems absurd that in order to make ends meet, I also have to babysit and bartend. I try to prioritize school and I live a modest lifestyle, but realistically, I cannot support myself on my stipend without working additional jobs. My stipend was secure/consistent throughout the pandemic (I'm grateful for this), but my supplementary jobs have been affected. My husband owns an event space/restaurant, which has been heavily affected by the pandemic, and my bartending gig is much less lucrative than it was before the pandemic. Even though I have a partner, we are now just hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. Aside from financial stress, we have also had to postpone our wedding and family planning. It's all a lot and I'm used to working on weekends and investing in my education, but the stipend that we receive is not sustainable. UMD prides itself on encouraging diversity but I know very few grad students who do not have family financial support or a partner who can carry their financial burden. Please provide us with an actually living wage, or if you cannot, please acknowledge/be understanding in your policies of students who need to supplement their income in other ways.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Yee

I'm a PhD student and this semester I'm funded as a TA and GA for separate positions, Human Development and Quantitative Methodology
University of Maryland, College Park
338 Prospect Place, Apt 4I, Brooklyn, NY 11238-4018
kat.yee15@gmail.com