

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 personally experienced the benefits of graduate student collective bargaining agreements when I was at the University of Wisconsin-Madison many years ago in a situation with many similarities to the situation at the University of Maryland system. The need for a union is manyfold from job protections to benefits. Without the union, the graduate students who are degreed professionals - have undergraduate degrees and perform work which supports the teaching and research carried on at the university, would have had less pay, might not have had a tuition remission, would have had fewer health benefits, and would not have had employment protections. For example, I was bullied by a high level university official (in a university research institute, position below the level of a dean) and the university was intransigently protecting him but union involvement, and nothing short of union involvement, was able to force the university to make him retract his threat although the university still never penalized him. Graduate students at every university face unfair difficulties and can benefit from the power of collective bargaining, and most universities and university systems don't want to yield their complete control, arguing that the students who are actual performing some of the work of the university are not employees. This is an ages old problem and the legislation is needed to force the hand in order to protect vulnerable workers who face a total power imbalance against an employer who holds all the cards that affect both their working conditions and terms and their future opportunities and careers.

Sincerely,

Stephen Jascourt

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