

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 a Biophysics PhD student at the University of Maryland. Over the course of my time as a student, I have had the displeasure of being both a TA and an RA. In my time as a TA, I have worked 30+ hours under inconsiderate conditions, grading 80 or more papers every week, co-TAing 500+ students, having 4 office hours per week with 30+students every session, grading all midterms and finals, and having very little to no time for my other mandatory and necessary studies, let alone time to do daily human tasks such as eating and sleeping.

As an RA, I have had little to no guidance in my research from just about anyone: my advisor, program coordinator, co-directors, etc in my department, and absolutely no guidance from anyone in the school outside of my department, utmost including The Graduate School and its administrators. I have no say as to my work conditions as a TA and RA, and therefore have had horrid mental health and consistent thoughts of suicide due to working long hours for very little pay.

I have talked with a myriad of peers, all of whom have had similar experiences as myself. If I were to choose another school, even one more disheveled as the University of Maryland, yet had more say as to my working conditions and collective bargaining, I would choose that school in a heartbeat. Frankly, I would choose most any other school to do my graduate studies than the University of Maryland, and have told multiple prospective students this. It is unfortunate that after a year and a half, this is how I view the university that I had so much hope for when starting.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lucker  
Research and Teaching Assistant at various times  
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