

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,

As a 3rd year graduate student, researcher, and instructor at UMD, I know how much we as GAs, RAs, or TAs contribute to our departments and the university. We are a crucial yet often hidden and undervalued resource that forms the backbone of our community - we conduct important research and often take on the tedious grunt work, we write and contribute to cutting edge, informative publications, we submit and receive grants, we teach and mentor undergraduate students and research assistants, we help recruit more graduate students to the program, etc. that all supports the continuation and reputation of the university and its faculty. Yet, we are often treated like the bottom of the barrel, with unlivable pay, no benefits, no protections, and little guidance and support in the event of problems we encounter. Collective bargaining rights should be the bare minimum for us as graduate students, and the university should be committed to treating us fairly and well, given all we contribute during our many years at UMD. There is often and unfortunately a toxic culture in academia, and a huge power imbalance when it comes to graduate students up against those who are higher up. It is necessary and imperative that graduate students have collective bargaining so that we are all more protected, and so that the risks and work of improving graduate student life at UMD do not befall just a small group of individuals. This is also more efficient - the voice of many is more powerful than just relying on the voice of one (or some).

Sincerely,

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