

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 34 years old and I recently left a career at Microsoft to conduct research in artificial intelligence as a graduate student at the University of Maryland. I am married, have a young daughter, and my salary as a Teaching Assistant is slightly less than what I pay for my daughter's daycare. Despite that, I love this work and I am proud to be working on problems with the potential to benefit society and national security. This is my job; it is a hard, meaningful job, but it is not paid like any of my previous jobs. I knew that going in, and my situation is fortunate enough to allow me to have made this choice. So the situation is a good news story for me, but it is not a good news story for the University of Maryland. The University of Maryland is falling behind in competitiveness.

The University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Illinois all have graduate student employee recognition, and the University of Maryland is last in the Big Ten for graduate student pay compared to cost of living. I made the choice to leave industry for research, but not everyone makes this choice given the incentives that are stacked against them. Work in industry is undoubtedly important, but I would love to see employment in national security research and future innovation research stand a fighting chance against employment at Facebook or Twitter. The University of Maryland is a treasure of which the state should be proud, and granting graduate student workers full employee recognition will only make it stronger.

Sincerely,

Monte Hoover

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