

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,

Collective bargaining right are some of the most fundamental worker rights there are. It acknowledges that workers should be treated with dignity and aren't just disposable slaves.

Graduate assistants and especially research assistant are what enables our university (UMD) to be one of the best schools in the country. My department (computer science) ranks in the top 10 in the county in terms of research output. My lab (the cybersecurity lab) is arguably in the top 10 in the world! This is all possible because of the highly skilled professors and exceptional graduate students this school attracts. However, this program is unsustainable. When considering work hours (very much in above 50-60 hours a week for most) we're essentially paid considerably lower than minimum wage. How does the school expect us to survive on that especially with the price surges that COVID brought? We need bargaining rights to force the school for fair pay.

Our program is one of the best in the world, if it wants to remain that way, it needs to show that it values its graduate students with the most basic worker rights.

Sincerely,

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