



January 24, 2022

AFSCME Local 1072 affirms that the real concerns of graduate student employees coincide with our union's ongoing efforts to improve systemic deficiencies in the working conditions at UMD. It is well-established that all constituencies face the consequences which arise when managers and supervisors subject employees to nebulous or contradictory strategy, poor or abusive communication, and management's unwillingness to honestly face and correct the structural problems that perpetuate an environment of inequity. All groups feel the burdens brought about by non-competitive, depressed wages, which cannot cover the costs of living in one of the most expensive, richest states in the nation. Both students and staff note the disparity evident when the University can boast both a near-billion-dollar endowment and a food bank on campus.

Our shared concerns diverge, though, when AFSCME-represented employees can exercise their legal rights to collectively redress their issues with management without fear of reprisal, while graduate student employees cannot. Where our union's members can raise their voices and exercise their rights at work to successfully demand and receive a \$15 per hour minimum wage, student employees can only wait and wonder when their own economic precarity will be deemed real, seen as valid, and judged worthy of attention by those who are happy to meet, eager to listen, but ever too slow to act. Our union members work side-by side with graduate students on a daily basis. Workers see our brothers, sisters, and siblings in academia helping to fulfill the University's goals with efficiency and with professionalism. Moreover, workers see our graduate students suffering as they are taken advantage of for their earnest aspirations as Terps - to "do good", to remain strong, and to be fearless.

AFSCME Local 1072 declares that these conditions must finally end, and that the legislature has a moral duty to act and to protect these current and future contributors to society. If we as Marylanders truly value the dignity of work, and if we as human beings truly value the idea that our greatness can only be measured by how we treat the most vulnerable among us, then these graduate student employees in service to the university must be afforded the right to bargain, and must be provided with an opportunity to collectively correct the conditions which have burdened them for far too long. AFSCME Local 1072 asks for a favorable report on SB0118.

In Solidarity,

The Executive Board and Members of AFSCME Local 1072
University of Maryland, College Park