

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,

Graduate students sit in an awkward state of limbo - are we students, or are we staff? I know that my duties and those of my fellow cohort are not those of a student, yet we are treated as such by the University. The University of Maryland routinely places amongst the lowest in compensation for graduate students at R1 universities, especially when the high cost of living in the state is taken into consideration. Not only is this wholly inadequate for current Graduate Students, but it effectively creates a massive barrier to entry because there are many that simply cannot afford to live like we do.

Collective bargaining rights are the first step in ensuring that the graduate students, which are a lynchpin to the functioning of the University, are appropriately compensated. Moreover, extending collective bargaining rights and negotiating with graduate students in a fair and good-faith manner means the university can avoid potentially damaging wildcat strikes that have been observed in recent months and years at several other universities. Giving us a legal framework to negotiate for our fair share means avoiding these less than ideal situations.

Sincerely,

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