

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

**By Amrina Rangar, Graduate Assistant for UMD Alternative Breaks
HB 493**

**State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants
February 9, 2024**

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Amrina Rangar and I am a Graduate Assistant for Alternative Breaks at the University of Maryland, College Park where I have worked for 6 months. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill. The state already grants the right of collective bargaining towards nearly every other state employee, as well as the faculty at our community colleges and the non-academic workforce at our four-year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland.

I supervise a team of 3 interns to facilitate the Alternative Breaks program through marketing, fundraising, and education. Each week, the intern team and I host 2 hours long trainings for the Alternative Breaks Experience Leaders to prepare them to lead their peers on a 7-10 day long service-learning trip during their spring, summer, or winter breaks. This work involves recruiting participants, experience leaders, staff advisors, and working with community partners all over the country to partner with in service and house our students. The work requires keeping up with multiple partnerships and being on call through breaks when trips are happening. Additionally, I am the only graduate student to co-chair a DEI committee for the STAMP department.

Though I enjoy this work and believe it makes a big difference for our students, I do not believe I am paid enough to sustain myself without an additional position. Last semester, I was able to obtain an additional job on campus teaching a class. It was not required of me through my program, but I needed it to supplement my bills for living my life in college park, even when being frugal with living expenses. Additionally, co-chairing a committee was never in my job description, and I do not get paid for the time I invest in the committee, and I am the only graduate student to do so. This inherent power dynamic makes it awkward for me to say no to joining or chairing a committee, and it is important for me to have a voice that could stand up for me when I'm unable to in these circumstances. Collective bargaining would allow us to have a voice and put measures in place that would prevent graduate workers from being taken advantage of, and allow for us to advocate for an appropriate living wage.

Members of the Committee, This state has for decades viewed collective bargaining between state employees and management as the best way to promote democracy in our workplaces and public institutions. The right to collective bargaining has long been recognized as not only a fundamental human right, but also as the best method of ensuring that employee voices play a vital role in constructing conditions that govern our workplaces. It is a right granted to many other public higher ed institutions in the nation, and indeed to many private, prestigious institutions in our own state. The reasons to exempt four-year public higher ed institutions from this path does not match our values. I again therefore call for a favorable report to this Bill.

Sincerely,
Amrina Rangar, Graduate Assistant for UMD Alternative Breaks
STAMP
University of Maryland, College Park
7901 Regents Drive, College Park, MD 20740
arangar@umd.edu

*This testimony has been submitted on behalf of this individual by the University of Maryland Graduate Labor Union (GLU) and the Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (UMD AAUP).
Please contact us at mail@umdgradworkers.org or umdaaup@gmail.com if you have any questions.*