

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Helen Craig, Graduate Student
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 Helen Craig and I am a graduate student at The University of Maryland, where I have worked for 2 years. 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.

In my two years at UMD I have truly never worked harder in my life. Along with taking classes and prepping for my own research, I have to teach undergraduate classes on various topics that are not always related to what I work on. There are usually 48 students in these classes. Generally, I am responsible for all things related to the lab section of these courses, including creating course material such as assignments, slides, and activities. I've spent numerous hours representing the university as a TA.

I strongly support this bill for collective bargaining rights because of the imbalanced workload and salary that I receive. It is practically unaffordable to live in or near College Park without external support from spouses or parents. I feel as though my work is not valued by the university especially as a woman in STEM.

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 make no sense. I again therefore call for a favorable report to this Bill.

Sincerely,
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*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.*