

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Maura Callahan, Graduate Assistant
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 Maura Callahan and I am a graduate assistant at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for nearly four 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.

My assistantship of the last two years has been located at an art gallery located on campus, where I organize and execute multiple ambitious exhibitions each semester and manage a team of several undergraduate docents. Although this work is loosely related to my field of study, it is not directly related to my dissertation. Prior to joining the gallery, I was a teaching assistant in the department of Art History & Archaeology, where I taught over fifty students per semester across two sections, grading over 100 assignments per week. This work also did not directly relate to my dissertation research.

My success in my graduate program and in my field has often suffered due to intensity of this work and the financial stress of earning too little to save for the future and, at times, afford immediate necessities like vehicle repairs. This bill would grant me and my fellow graduate student colleagues the right to seek fair working conditions that are necessary for our completion of our graduate programs and future success in our fields.

Members of the Committee, I again ask you to call a favorable report to this Bill and support the exercising of democracy in all workplaces. There is no meaningful reason to exclude public higher education institutions from this standard. Because the wellbeing and success of our graduate students depends on the right to collective bargaining, so too does the reputation and legitimacy of our public higher education institutions.

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.*