

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Henry Hausmann, 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 Henry Hausmann and I am a graduate assistant in atmospheric and oceanic science at the University of Maryland College Park, where I have worked for 4 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.

I do research on how to defend our coastlines from sea level rise and natural disasters. Specifically, I'm analyzing the utilization of key eco-systems, such as salt marshes and oyster reefs for the purposes of climate adaptation. It's work that I love and is critical for the future progress and prosperity. I'm just one of the many graduate assistants whose work that makes the university function. We do the research. We do the teaching. We do the administrative work. We, the graduate workers, are the university. Without our work, the USM simply cannot function.

I don't want anything radical. I just want the right to band together with my colleagues and fight for far better conditions. I don't think a stipend that keeps up with the cost of living is too much to ask. I don't think the type of enforceable contracts that are the cornerstone of employment in every other sector, but are denied to graduate assistants, will cause the sky to fall. I don't think a functional grievance procedure that holds advisors and administrators (who hold all the power in academia) is an unreasonable expectation. The USM administration even promises it to us! I assumed the some kind of reasonable grievance procedure was extant up until the day I had to use it. That's when I discovered all I had was a labyrinth of nonbinding and verbal agreements and the aid of a few individuals. No systemic support. No institutions on my side. It's unacceptable. And the basic right of collective bargaining is the best path to right all of these wrongs.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I again call for a favorable report to this Bill. Help to make Maryland the bastion of academic excellence and equitable work that it has the potential to be.

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.*