

**Written Testimony Submitted to the  
Maryland House Appropriations Committee  
By Clara Irazabal, Director, Urban Studies and Planning Program  
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 Clara Irazabal, and I am the Urban Studies and Planning Program Director at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for three years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report on this Bill. The state already grants the right of collective bargaining to nearly every other state employee, the faculty at our community colleges, and the non-academic workforce at our four-year institutions. This right should be extended to all higher education workers in Maryland.

Enacting this bill into law will go a long way to resolve those issues, directly providing the platform to effectively improve working conditions (salary, workload, job stability), racial and gender equity issues, governance, and negative effects on student education, ultimately benefiting the prosperity of Maryland and all Marylanders. collective bargaining can also help reverse attacks on higher education by allowing faculty and students an independent collective voice.

Members of the Committee, let us honor our state history. 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 education institutions in the nation and, indeed, to many private, prestigious institutions in our state. The reasons to exempt four-year public higher education institutions from this path make no sense. I again, therefore, urge 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).  
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