

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Daniel Greene, Assistant Professor
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,

I am Dr. Daniel Greene and I am an Assistant Professor of Information Studies at the University of Maryland in College Park, where I have worked for 5 years as faculty, and, a decade ago, another six years as a graduate student. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill. The state already grants the right to collectively bargain to nearly every other state employee, as well as our brothers and sisters at our community colleges and the staff in our 4 year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to the rest of higher education in Maryland.

I study how technology changes the workplace, and I train the undergraduates and graduate students who go on to fill urgent gaps in our state and national workforce as data scientists and software developers. As a graduate student in 2010-2016, the two classes I taught every semester had nothing to do with my research on labor and technology--I taught classes on everything from pop culture to the history of race and racism--and were never supervised by my advisor. They were simply how I made rent; along with plenty of other odd jobs, from administering SATs to refereeing basketball games. I was lucky to have those--my colleagues here on a student visa are forbidden from working off campus. The dissertation, the thing I was supposedly there to do, was completed on nights and weekends. Of my graduate cohort, I am one of the lucky few to secure a tenure track faculty position--let alone one near my daughter's grandparents! Most of my peers are contingent faculty, teaching four or five classes a semester on semester-to-semester contracts, without an office for office hours.

After receiving my PhD, I worked at Microsoft. The job was terrific and the money was great (more than I'll make for some time as faculty), but I felt a pull home to serve the great state of Maryland. Especially when some of my old students wrote to me in distress after the murder of Richard Collins III on campus. They felt the university wasn't working for everyone. And despite my new job, I have to agree. Our bosses talk about shared governance but there is no shared governance over university budgets. Instruction units control their expenses but have no control over the largest sources of revenue: undergrad tuition and state funding. The provost has frozen our college's undergraduate revenue, and as a result, my undergraduate classes rarely have less than 75 students. I cannot train the workforce of the future when I can't even learn their names. Our working conditions are their learning conditions. My peer faculty who are women and people of color do not feel safe speaking up about workplace harassment because, instead of a collective bargaining process where we face management as independent equals, we have various HR systems through which the university can protect itself, rather than its workers. Plus an ombudsperson with no arbitration power, simply a license to contact offender and offeree and talk things out. And frankly, a non-union workplace is not a competitive one. When Maryland acts like conservative, right-to-work state, it prevents me from recruiting the best graduate students, who seek out the security of U Michigan or Berkeley's union contracts, or the best faculty, who worry we won't have any way to fight back when a Republican takes the governor's mansion again and starts banning

books like Florida. We need to match the standard set by our peers in New Jersey, California, Illinois, Michigan--where faculty and graduate student unions have long been a part of their vibrant public universities. Governor Moore has said he will sign this bill. He demands we leave no one behind in Maryland. But year after year, Annapolis has chosen to leave behind 27,000 members of the state's academic workforce and the 100,000 students we teach every year.

I urge the members of this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill. The right to collective bargaining would put us on equal footing with other state workers, ensuring that we can negotiate with the administration for the resources we need to do our jobs, create safer workplaces, and recruit top students and faculty to our great state. Maryland has long recognized that collective bargaining is a fundamental human right, one that ensures the public sector works not only for its workers but the public at large. We must live up to our labor values within our greatest resource: The universities training Maryland's future workforce.

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.*