

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Emilio Weber, Graduate Teaching 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 Emilio Weber, a graduate teaching assistant in the Kinesiology Department within the school of public health at the University of Maryland at College park. 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 teach four class sections per semester with 18-24 students in each. I love teaching and our department always preaches the benefit of training and educating the next generation of college students. However, its impossible to imagine continuing with the wages and working conditions we have. We need higher wages to live dignified lives in the DMV region. We also need the ability to collectively bargain for those wages and clear workplace guidelines, because without the labor me and my colleagues provide, the university would not be able to function.

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.*