

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

By Jared Ball, Professor of Communication Studies at Morgan State University

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 Jared Ball and I am a Professor at Morgan State University. Faculty at Morgan State are routinely continuing to play traditional roles serving students and communities whose experiences as students are themselves non-traditional. The routinization of those "non-traditional" conditions is perhaps a topic for another day, however, it remains that we are duty bound to serve communities often abandoned by society. And yet, many of us faculty feel abandoned by a working relationship with our institution that is not commensurate with what should be by now the basics of 21st century labor relations and which makes the highest levels of job performance impossible.

With more than 20 years teaching at Maryland universities, 17 of which have been at Morgan State, I have seen first-hand the damage caused by the absence of collective bargaining rights. Junior faculty are overrun by course loads, low pay, and few to no benefits while senior faculty are unable to properly negotiate for their own conditions much less those of their less protected colleagues. And while it is certainly true that HBCUs like Morgan suffer gross imbalances in resources compared to their PWI counterparts the absence of genuine representation or bargaining power continues to assure massive discrepancies in distribution of what resources exist.

In my time alone, I have suffered personally or witnessed first-hand having watched my own work plagiarized and submitted for funding, an erasure of any observable criteria for advancement or compensation, Deans with Bachelor degrees running schools where in-field Ph.Ds. are removed for their having any desire for academic freedom, salaries of favored faculty bumped while the rest are told forever to wait for new studies to conclude women and senior faculty are under-paid, faculty openly referred to as "terrorists" for having been born outside the U.S., direct threats of abuse of power by administration, and an endless list of passive aggressive hostilities. Yet, despite all the complaints, meetings, statements, and efforts to address these and so many other concerns, faculty are forced into silence, encouraged to seek employment elsewhere, or are targeted and told directly that, "if I cannot fire you I will make you quit" as was said to me and several others by Dwayne Wickham, a now retired Dean of the School of Communications.

Teaching, learning, and research all are best served by faculty who are themselves supported, confident in their place, properly compensated, and who have the ability to collectively bargain to assure optimum experience for all involved. The quality of research diminishes when faculty are over-worked and under-paid and have no voice to raise and no ability to make themselves heard. The quality of student experience is only enhanced when engaged by faculty who are not exhausted by their third or fourth class of the day, having to come from meetings where they are only threatened into doing more for fear of losing their job, or who have the ability to conduct research and teach in stress-free environments. No labor force should be without an ability to collectively bargain and no one interested in the best results of that

labor should stand in the way of this fundamental point.

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.*