

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

By Siv B. Lie, Associate 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,

Good afternoon. My name is Siv B. Lie and I am an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for 6.5 years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this bill. The state already grants this right towards nearly every other state employee, as well as the faculty at our community colleges and the non-academic workforce at our 4 year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to the rest of higher education in Maryland.

My primary appointment is in the Division of Musicology and Ethnomusicology in the School of Music, and I have affiliate appointments in the Department of Anthropology; the Center for Global Migration Studies; the School of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies; and the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity. Since I began working at UMD, I have taught two courses per semester, in addition to continuous advising of my division's graduate students. To date, I have instructed a total of about 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students. I also engage in a large number of service activities, such as serving on a variety of committees, to ensure that my division and unit can continue to function. A central feature of my job is research, which includes time spent conducting ethnographic fieldwork, publishing, giving conference papers and invited talks, developing public-facing media, and collaborating with community partners, among other activities. My research centers on issues of race and social justice, which my university explicitly prioritizes in its Strategic Plan.

I support this bill because I know I am not alone as an overworked faculty member with little meaningful say in how my institution is governed. This bill is a crucial step in bringing democracy and transparent negotiation to my workplace. Without the passage of this bill, faculty are extremely constrained in their avenues to advocate for fair working conditions. For example, the level of service and advising I have to do is unusually high, but my division is understaffed in its tenure-track lines, so each of us must shoulder much more than our job descriptions call for. Due to this heavy workload during the school year, I am only able to pursue the majority of the research that is required of this position during winter and summer breaks, even though I am on a 10-month contract. Through the collective bargaining that this bill would enable, faculty like myself would finally have the opportunity to remedy the considerable workload and pay imbalances we are facing. This bill would also empower non-tenure-track faculty and graduate assistants, who face far more precarious situations than tenure-track faculty, to ensure that they too can negotiate for the stable, humane working conditions and livable wages they deserve.

Members of the committee, now is the time to join other states in guaranteeing the basic democratic right of collective bargaining to all employees in public higher education. We are simply asking for the ability to do the jobs our employer hired us to do under fair working conditions. Research has made clear that collective bargaining is an important tool in strengthening relationships between university administration, faculty, and students, and

that it helps ensure equity of many types. If our university system is to live up to its claims to support social justice and remain one of the best public institutions for higher education in this country, it is imperative that its workers gain the right to collectively bargain. Therefore, I again call for a favorable report to this bill.

Sincerely,
Siv B. Lie, Associate Professor
School of Music
University of Maryland, College Park
7901 Regents Drive, College Park, MD 20740
sivblie@gmail.com

*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.*