

As a faculty member at Frostburg State University, I support House Bill 0493, which would provide collective bargaining rights to faculty, part-time faculty, post-doctoral associates, and graduate assistants at State institutions of higher education. While there is a long history of shared governance at my institution, it is not sufficient to protect the rights of faculty like me who are deeply committed to the success of students enrolled at USM institutions across the state. Over the last few years at my institution, I have witnessed the breakdown of respect for the shared governance process from administrators, through a lack of communication, transparency, accountability, and a failure to adhere to institutional norms and stated policies and procedures. This has created an environment that detracts from the student experience and encourages highly qualified and accomplished faculty to leave the system. Collective bargaining would allow faculty and administrators to more effectively address issues related to work conditions, teaching workloads, contracts, salaries, and benefits so our time and energy can be applied to those factors that directly benefit our students. As a Maryland native and an FSU alumnus, I'm proud of the contributions I make to the state and society through my work. I believe that my colleagues and I deserve the same collective bargaining rights that are provided to workers in other sectors.

Dr. Jodi G. Welsch  
Professor  
Frostburg State University