

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

By Beth Guay

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 Beth Guay and I am a Continuing Resources Librarian at the University of Maryland where I have worked for 28 years. 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.

Library faculty members select, acquire, preserve, and describe library collections. We provide access to these collections via archival finding aids, digital repositories, library catalogs, and research consultations. We provide research instruction to undergraduate and graduate students. We partner with research and teaching faculty on grants and applied research. Library faculty members initiate and support open access publishing and open textbooks programs to address the high costs of scholarship. We are respected authors of scholarly works in our fields and disciplines. My work serves to collocate related scholarly resources in library catalogs in support of research discovery. I provide access to and discovery of scholarly works, many authored and edited by USM faculty and published or issued by their institutions. For these works and many others, I create and enhance catalog and authority records as a member of the national Program for Cooperative Cataloging. I contribute these records to the Library of Congress' Name Authorities and Serials databases. These records are distributed by the Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service and made available to approximately 16,000 member libraries that rely on WorldCat catalog records.

Retention of library faculty is an ongoing problem. Low salaries and excessive workloads are apparent contributors to the Libraries' retention problem. Librarians' salaries are not competitive with other academic and federal government librarian salaries in the DMV. When librarians leave, their responsibilities are often assigned to those who remain, increasing workloads. In 2018, 9 library faculty members were promoted to ranks with permanent status (equivalent to tenure). Between 2019 and 2022, five of these nine left for positions at other academic institutions or the Library of Congress (4 for positions in the DMV). Three of the 5 were parents of young children. Permanent status track faculty are leaving as well, not due to an inability to meet the requirements for promotion. Of one hired in 2018 who left in 2022, their supervisor's praise of their performance included remarks of appreciation for the additional responsibilities they had taken on in 2022. The State of Maryland's investments in library faculty ultimately reward institutions outside of the University and of Maryland. I believe that enacting HB0493 will lead to fairer salaries and workloads that will help the Libraries retain outstanding librarians who apply their professional, scholarly and disciplinary knowledge in support of the educational mission of the University.

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.*