

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

By Dia Sekayi, 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,

My name is Dia Sekayi and I am an Associate Professor at Morgan State University where I have worked for 8 years. I am also a member of the American Association of University Professors. 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. This right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland.

As a full-time tenured faculty member my administrative role accounts for 50% of my time, my teaching 30%, research 25%, and service 10%. My planned workload authorized by the university is currently 115%. Working with doctoral students is a heavy lift that only those of us who do it understand. I and all my program colleagues have carried an unreasonable load of doctoral students for as long as I have been at the university, sometimes advising the dissertations of 20 or more students, where a reasonable load is 3- 5 students.

In addition to the planned overload, there are continuous requests for all of us to do more. I am an organized person, and I work nearly every day of the week to keep up with the workload expectation.

Intellectual labor is often cast off as privileged as are those who do the work. Intellectual laborers are often subjected to abusive career-specific practices and need protection. We experience workload issues that are particular to academia. Being unreasonably overloaded is a concern and to be overloaded without appropriate compensation is an even greater concern. Having a collective voice would be a safer way to address this and other concerns.

Members of the Committee, this state favors the right to bargain collectively for many other groups, including some with who faculty work side-by-side. 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.*