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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 823**  
**State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, Post Doctoral**  
**Associates, and Graduate Assistants**  
**Finance**  
**March 7, 2024**

Thank you, Chair Pamela Beidle Vice Chair Katherine Klausmeier, and finance Committee members for considering SB823, which would extend collective bargaining rights to adjunct faculty and graduate assistants at institutions within the University of System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University and St. Mary's College of Maryland. My name is Elizabeth Guillen, a resident of District 15 and a member of Student Advocates for Social Change, a graduate student coalition at the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 823. As someone who has experienced the fear of speaking up for a better work environment and equal treatment due to the possibility of retaliation, I cannot imagine having to work in a place where I don't have equal rights as others. Such an environment would have a negative impact on my self-esteem and my family and would affect how I view the world. The passage of SB823 would be a crucial legislative step towards promoting the rights and representation of faculty, part-time faculty, postdoctoral associates, and graduate assistants in Maryland's state institutions of higher education.

**SB823 recognizes the importance of embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion in our public universities to promote the well-being of all individuals and communities.** This vision aligns with the University of Maryland's mission to create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.<sup>1</sup> It acknowledges that promoting these values is not only morally right but also educationally sound.

**SB823 proposes a significant advancement in the realm of collective bargaining rights for these groups, ensuring that their voices are heard and their interests are adequately represented.** By establishing separate collective bargaining units, SB823 acknowledges the unique needs and contributions of these essential members of the academic community.

The inclusivity and fairness promoted by this bill are not just beneficial for the employees at these institutions but also for the broader educational system. A well-represented and supported faculty and staff are fundamental to fostering a thriving, dynamic educational environment, which in turn benefits our students and the state's future.

Social Work Advocates for Social Change supports SB823, a progressive move towards a more equitable and effective higher education system in Maryland. I urge your favorable consideration



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and support for this legislation. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for supporting SB823.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Guillen

1. [University of Maryland Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#)

*Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.*