

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee**

By Joshua Shannon, Professor

SB0823

State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants

March 7, 2024

FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Joshua Shannon, Professor in the department of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for over eighteen years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill. The state already grants the right of collective bargaining to 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.

I am very worried about the threat to our democratic culture posed by the transformation of universities in this country over the last few decades. As the number of administrators, and the salaries paid to them, have exploded, universities have come to rely more and more on proletarianized teachers. These adjunct professors often teach many courses at several institutions every semester and still earn less than a living wage. Our collective disinvestment in learning will hobble our state and our nation. Collective bargaining is the only serious tool university teachers have to fight the re-allocation of spending away from learning and toward administration, athletics, and student lifestyle amenities. If you support the centrality of research, knowledge, and teaching to a flourishing democratic society, please support the right of the teachers to collectivize their needs.

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 info@umdgradworkers.org or umdaaup@gmail.com if you have any questions.*