

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

By Clarisa Zarate de Leon

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 Clarisa and I am a graduate coordinator for education and outreach in the office of student conduct. I am also on the restorative justice committee to start implementing non-punitive forms of justice. I have worked at UMD for 2 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.

I do much administrative work for the University as well as outreach to students across campus. This looks like giving presentation on academic integrity, student conduct and hazing, as well as coordinating large-scale events to spread the values of ethics, character, and integrity. None of this work is NOT related to my thesis nor my research.

Collective bargaining could help my quality of life immensely. For example, this past year, at University-owned graduate housing, my rent increased 4% while my pay only increased 2%. While that doesn't seem as much, that's not accounting for the inflation of groceries, graduate fees that the school requires (which can range up to \$900, a good \$100-200 short of my full paycheck).

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,

Clarisa Zarate de Leon
University of Maryland, College Park
7901 Regents Drive, College Park, MD 20740
deleon7@umd.edu

*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.*