

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
By Joel Chan, Assistant 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 Joel Chan and I am an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland College Park, where I have worked for 6 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.

Let me first give some context about me and the work I do for the State of Maryland as part of my job. Each year, I teach 3 courses, across undergraduate and graduate programs (a total of approximately 100 students a semester), and serve as primary advisor for a group of 6 graduate students at the doctoral and master's level. The other parts of my workload involve research (including sponsored grants from federal and private sources), and service to the College, university, and my profession. For instance, I am currently serving as the Assistant Director of the Doctoral program in my College, supervising the curriculum and mentorship for more than 80 doctoral students who are training to (and already) produce cutting-edge research in the information sciences.

The work I do relies on working conditions that are not always guaranteed: among other things, this includes the financial conditions for the doctoral students I supervise, policies on telework that enable me, my colleagues, and my students, to balance the demands of our home lives, our health (as we now have an additional family of coronaviruses added to our seasonal illness cycles), and the work that we do. On this last point, I am particularly concerned about public health policy on campus, and how it interacts with the rush to return to pre-pandemic normalcy (and possibly erasing the gains in accessibility from health interventions and telework, for instance). Making wise and just decisions about these issues depends critically on collective input from us, the workers of the state of Maryland.

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.