

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
By Joshua Davis, Associate Professor of History
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 Davis and I am an associate professor of history at the University of Baltimore, a state university for working adults and first-generation students of all ages that has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a predominantly Black institution. I have taught at UBalt for nine years.

I am also a member of our university's chapter of the American Association of University Professors. AAUP chapters at Ubalt, Towson, College Park, Bowie, Salisbury, Frederick Community College, Howard Community College, and Montgomery County College have all voted to strongly endorse legislation enabling collective bargaining rights for state university faculty and graduate assistants.

I am testifying to respectfully ask that your respective committee issue favorable reports to House Bill 493 and Senate Bill 823, because university faculty and graduate assistants, like all other state workers, deserve the right of collective bargaining.

To anyone having doubts about supporting this bill, I'd ask: K-12 teachers can do collective bargaining in this state, and so can non-faculty staff at state universities as well as community college faculty. So why are USM faculty denied the right of collective bargaining? How can anyone who claims to support workers and to support education in Maryland not trust our university faculty to responsibly exercise the right of collective bargaining?

For those opposing this bill, I would ask, why aren't you willing to provide University System of Maryland faculty the dignity and respect that we deserve as state workers?

Collective bargaining rights for our state faculty would allow our state schools to retain more faculty who otherwise leave our state for other states where faculty have those rights. It would allow us to attract prospective faculty who pass on jobs in Maryland in favor of states with collective bargaining rights for faculty. In short, because collective bargaining rights for faculty would allow us to retain and attract faculty, it would be a net boon for our undergraduates.

At the University of Baltimore, I'm proud to report that many of our undergraduates go on to pursue fulfilling careers in K-12 public education. We've had at least four alums of our History program become teachers in Baltimore City and Baltimore County public schools directly after graduation in the last five years.

One major reason I'm happy to encourage our students to pursue K-12 teaching is because our public school educators in Maryland belong to unions with collective bargaining rights.

It's this feature of public school employment that makes teaching in Maryland much more appealing to college graduates than teaching in states like West Virginia, where teachers are prohibited from collective bargaining.

Sadly, the lack of collective bargaining for USM faculty is a chief reason why I'm less inclined to encourage our graduates to pursue faculty teaching jobs in our state university system. Unlike neighboring state university systems in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Washington, D.C., our USM faculty are barred from collective bargaining.

This strikes me as not only unfair, but also short sighted. Our state is losing out on talented graduate students and university faculty to neighboring states where the university systems allow collective bargaining. Faculty and graduate students want the protections of union membership, as a wave of recent unionization drives on college campuses such as Johns Hopkins University and Northwestern University illustrate.

I suspect that most of you support the right of our K-12 teachers to do collective bargaining, and that you also supported the Kirwin bill because you wanted to strengthen our state's public education system. If passed, House Bill 493 and Senate Bill 823, would have a similarly positive effect on public education in Maryland by improving our universities' ability to attract faculty who can boost our state's university system, in turn helping to keep it one of the best in the country.

This legislation is good for state workers and good for our state's college students.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask that your committee issue favorable reports on House Bill 493 and Senate Bill 823.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joshua Davis, Associate Professor of History
University of Baltimore
7901 Regents Drive, College Park, MD 20740
joshuaclarkdavis@gmail.com

*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.*