

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
By Brian O'Malley, Graduate Research Assistant
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 Brian O'Malley, I am a graduate research assistant (GRA) at the University of Maryland College Park. It is an excellent institution which I am privileged to be a part of and one that I believe is making legitimate contributions to our society everyday. It is also a very progressive institution and continues to push for greater inclusion and affirmation of students and staff from all walks of life. This should be something to take pride in, but doing so is difficult when administrators continue to ignore the needs and demands of their employees. This is easy to do when many of the its employees come from out of the country, have limited employment opportunities due to their visa status, and cannot afford to negotiate with their superiors. This power imbalance directly contradicts the University's values of being respectful, inclusive, accountable, and open to growth. It's particularly ironic that "united" is listed first among our values when the right to "unite" is denied.

I am sympathetic to many of the administrations concerns, compensation in particular is a difficult issue to address as there are a large number of GRAs and increasing our wages would cost the \$60 million (according to testimony made on behalf of the university in Senate Bill 118 01/27/2022). If additional funds were not generated, the administrators stated that this would cut the number of GRAs by 40%. Coincidentally, the university spent the same amount of money on only 100 employees in 2021 (\$56 million according to open payrolls) but has made no threats to their employment. I have no issue with high value individuals being well compensated for their service to the university, but it is frustrating when these same individuals testify against efforts improve the standard of living for their colleagues while making (on average) 27 times their salary.

I want to thank the committee for taking the time to review this Bill and hope that it finds itself in support of what is a very important piece legislation. It is a represents a critical step towards a better future for the states flagship university and all those who serve it.

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.*