

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee**

By Gerard Holmes, Lecturer

HB0661

State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty

March 4, 2025

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Gerard Holmes. I have been a non-tenure-track Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Maryland, College Park since 2020, and I have taught for the University since 2016. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report on 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. There is no good reason that this right should not be extended, equally, to all higher-education workers in Maryland.

Non-tenure-track faculty lack fundamental job security. For example, I currently work on an annual contract. We are paid markedly less, and enjoy fewer benefits, than tenured and tenure-track faculty, despite earning equivalent degrees and credentials. I teach a wide-ranging suite of courses in introductory writing and rhetoric, professional writing, and literature. As a full-time Lecturer, I teach four classes per semester, each of which typically enrolls between nineteen and thirty students. These classes are often assigned late in the preceding semester, offering relatively little time to prepare.

Students consider Lecturers like me to be Professors, though we are not, and with good reason. Outside of the classroom, in addition to office hours, I actively support students, counseling on their career goals, directing them to campus resources when they are in need or in crisis, and writing numerous letters of recommendation, each semester, for graduate-school admissions, jobs, and internships. I worry, sometimes, when telling students to stay in touch if they need this kind of support, because any given year I might not be offered a contract renewal. This is just one way in which students are negatively affected by the current unequal working conditions dividing tenure-eligible and nontenure-eligible faculty. Collective bargaining would allow all faculty to speak with one voice, and to negotiate for equitable working conditions for all. It would also permit mutual support between faculty and administrative staff in the university system.

Members of the Committee, Maryland 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 education 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,

Gerard Holmes, Lecturer

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This testimony has been submitted on behalf of this individual by the United Academics of Maryland.