

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Baynard Woods
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 Baynard Woods and, though I am primarily a journalist, I have taught as an adjunct at many public universities in Maryland over the last 20 years, most recently at Coppin State in the Fall 2024 semester. Having seen the tremendous strains put on the adjunct workforce and the lack of a voice we have, 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. This right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland.

As an adjunct, I found that I had virtually none of the protections that one would expect in working for the state of Maryland. At Coppin State, though I had signed a contract months earlier, I was not told that I would need to do a background check with the corporate company HireRight and a police background check until the first day of class and that I could not get a university ID, or email address, until those were complete. The corporate background-check company could not process freelance employment well and was not able to complete my check for weeks. This not only hurt me as a worker but also my students. I did not have access to Blackboard, an official campus email, or any of the other tools I needed to effectively teach and yet I was expected to be in the class. Even more egregious from a labor perspective, I was not paid until well past the halfway point of the semester--and I had no recourse and no representation to deal with any of these labor issues.

Collective bargaining and union representation could have helped address these issues and improved the quality of life of adjunct employees like myself and the students we teach. Without union representation, I was left to try to navigate an administration and its third-party, corporate partners on my own.

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, even those of part-time or temporary faculty, 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 and deny those basic human rights to an important class of workers in Maryland. I call on members of the committee to issue a favorable report on this bill.

Sincerely,

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