

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

By Giovanni Forni, Professor

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 Giovanni Forni and I am Professor of Mathematics at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for 17 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.

At the University of Maryland, I have taught a variety of undergraduates and graduate courses, I have done research in Dynamical Systems and supervised 7 graduate students (of which 6 have graduated) and 2 post-docs. I have also served regularly in committees at the Department and University level.

In my years at the University of Maryland, College Park, I have witnessed wide disparities in salary and workload which are not justified. The decisions are mostly top-down and there is a lack of shared governance at the unit and College level. The university rules are enforced, or not enforced, in a capricious way, presumably according to an agenda of the administration, which is often difficult to decipher. The promotion and tenure process is not followed properly and the requirements are unclear. This has a bad influence on morale and leads to an excessive turnover, as younger colleagues and especially women and members of other underrepresented groups leave in search of better opportunities.

I believe that collective bargaining rights would improve accountability of the administration, resulting in better outcomes in research and teaching.

Members of the Committee, to exempt four-year public higher ed institutions from collective bargain rights may have made sense in the past, but it makes no longer sense given the much larger number of non-tenured faculty, the often arbitrary wide disparities in treatment of tenured or tenure track faculty, and the increased power of administrations and of donors. I 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 United Academics of Maryland.