

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations
Committee
By Cassandra Hradil, Faculty Specialist
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 Cassandra Hradil, and I am a faculty specialist in the School of Arts and Humanities at UMD College Park. I am non-tenure track, and I began this job in the fall. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report on this Bill. The state already grants the right of collective bargaining to nearly every other state employee, as well as community college faculty and the non-academic workforce at four year institutions. This right should be extended to all higher education workers in Maryland.

While I only began this job a few months ago, it has quickly become clear to me that our faculty body struggles with inequity with regards to workload, compensation, job security, and professional development. I have heard stories about faculty who are overworked to the point of burnout. Most of my colleagues here at UMD are non-tenure track, and must constantly be looking for permanent jobs elsewhere. My former workplace recently voted to unionize, and I have seen the ways that having a seat at the table empowered people to speak up about their working conditions. Colleagues began sharing workplace issues that had gone on for years, many of which they had tried to address earlier either by speaking with admin or through shared governance, without any success. Once our new union was certified, we were able to begin resolving these issues - which ranged from unfair work schedules to inadequate office space and more. My colleagues were able to bring their issues to leadership with the security of having a union steward or representative in the room to help support and represent them. My new colleagues here at the University of Maryland need and deserve that same security and representation.

I would like to reiterate that shared governance is inadequate to meet our needs as faculty here at UMD. The university senate has the ability to advise and make recommendations to the university president, but it has no teeth. Again, at my former institution, I saw shared governance fail to address chronic issues around workload, job security, and working conditions for years; once our union was certified, we finally had the systematic support needed for individual colleagues to see movement on these issues - and to fight for a contract that addresses them in the long term. This is true here at UMD, too. Only a strong collective bargaining agreement will

give us the ability to enact lasting change to our working conditions - something that is binding on both faculty and university leadership.

Members of the committee, this state has for decades viewed collective bargaining between state employees and management as the best way to promote democracy in our workplaces and public institutions. 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 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. It makes no sense to exempt four year public higher ed institutions from this right. I again therefore call for a favorable report to this Bill. Thank you.

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