

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Richard Bell, 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 Richard Bell and I am a Professor of History at the University of Maryland, where I have worked for nearly 20 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. I do three types of work in the course of my regular responsibilities: research, teaching, and service. Research involves months and years tracking down archival evidence to be interpreted and analyzed to form the basis of original peer-reviewed articles and books aimed at general audiences. Teaching involves two full-scale classes each semester--typically large-format lecture classes aimed at undergraduates across the university who are not usually history majors. Service involves all the committee work and mentoring and advising that keeps the great machine at the University of Maryland running. I teach hundreds of students each year and advise and mentor many more. I support collective bargaining for all USM faculty so that we can be afforded the same worker protections as all other state employees. In our current climate, I also believe it is essential to achieve collective bargaining doing so can help reverse attacks on higher education by allowing faculty and students an independent collective voice. 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. 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 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. I again 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.