

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Appropriations Committee
By Zachary Dorner, Assistant 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 Zachary Dorner and I am a full time Assistant Professor of History (tenure track) at the University of Maryland, College Park where I have worked in various roles for 5 years. 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. It is clear that this right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland. While at UMD, College Park I have worked under a variety of conditions that depended on my employment status. As a non-tenure-track faculty member, I and my colleagues were subjected to unclear workload policies and a lack of equity in teaching load. Now as I tenure-track faculty member in the History Department, I see that such experiences are not universal at the university--but a lack of transparency and uniformity often still is. This affects our ability to teach, research, and serve our campus communities as effectively as we can. Students see this as well. I support this bill because shared governance is critical to UMD's education mission and critical to my personal pedagogy. If my university does not have shared governance with the entirety of its faculty, how is it pretending to deliver the best possible education to its students? Faculty are the ones in the classroom with students on a day-to-day basis often serving as front-line responders to personal and health crises. As support and resources for faculty slowly erode, so too will the student experience unless we are able to participate in the university's governance. 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. Now, more than ever, Maryland must stand as an example to its people and to its students of democratic participation and intellectual honesty--collective bargaining is a big part of that. 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 ask you 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.