

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

By Ryan King-White, 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 Ryan King-White. I am Tenured at Towson University. I teach in the Department of Kinesiology and Honors College, and have earned several awards for my research in the sociology of sport and pedagogical practices. This includes several projects with my undergraduate students. In addition, I provide service to my institution at all levels and have taken on leadership roles in the PTRM committee, University Curriculum Committee, and serve as an alternate on CUSF. I have been at Towson University for 19 years.

I am working with my colleagues and AFT Maryland to secure collective bargaining rights through this bill. As faculty, I am one of only a very few Maryland public employees without these rights.

As a faculty member with tenure I do have some job security, though the recent retrenchment at Frostburg puts that status in question. Yet, that is not what I am most concerned with. Instead, our Promotion and Tenure process at Towson University is fraught with people in positions of power who wield it in immoral and unethical ways that hurt faculty in less secure positions and this could be curbed with a strong union.

To be certain, there is a proclamation that this process is part of shared governance since we get to vote at the departmental level and provide a letter of recommendation for the chair, college committee, and dean. However, I have witnessed on no less than 7 occasions where this letter is dismissed and negative reviews are provided at the chairperson, college and/or dean level that reverses a positive recommendation and leaves a faculty member jobless or without a promotion. There are academic presentations and publications that have been published and/or are in the process of dissemination that discuss this situation. On one occasion, a faculty member was able to get the negative recommendation reversed by going through the EEOC and Office of Inclusion and Institutional Equity, but no consequences were levied on the offending parties.

Collective bargaining could begin to alter the balance of power that a weak shared governance system simply cannot provide. If people in positions of power choose not to respect shared governance it simply does not matter. With collective bargaining our voice and decisions can make a difference at Towson University in such a way as to make it a more equitable place to work. This would also mitigate future risk to the institution brought about by faculty members who have been mistreated conducting research and disseminating poor administrative behaviors to the consuming public. In a time where institutions are competing to draw students to attend this reputational hit could have long-term consequences on the USM and Towson University.

Sincerely,

Ryan King-White, Professor

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