



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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HB 661 - State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty House Appropriations Committee March 4, 2025

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
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Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 661. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

The "meet and confer" process, a USM-led compromise in 2012 to stonewall collective bargaining efforts, has failed. Shared governance, co-governance, and faculty senates are not substitutes for legal rights for workers. The only way for employees to collectively and effectively work with higher education institutions to improve working conditions is by having the freedom to exercise their right form and join a union of their choice.

HB 661 grants collective bargaining rights to certain public employees that have been organizing to demand these rights for over a decade. Maryland law currently prohibits collective bargaining for faculty at the University System of Maryland (USM), Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland. HB 661 corrects this injustice by granting these workers the opportunity to come together and negotiate for their interests in the workplace. The only obstacle between these workers and the same rights granted to thousands of their peers is Maryland's prohibitive law.

Collective bargaining for faculty (full and part-time) is not new. A 2024 report released by the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions found that nearly one in four faculty members were represented by unions.¹ This amounted to 402,217 unionized faculty members spanning 600-plus colleges across 30 states and the District of Columbia. At least a hundred higher education facilities from Ivy League universities like Yale and Harvard to small private colleges like Goucher have collective bargaining agreements with their faculty. In 2021, Maryland expanded unionization rights to community colleges across the state. As of today, there are 9 different

¹ Audrey Williams June, "About One in Four Faculty Members Are Unionized, Study Finds." The Chronicle of Higher Education. August 2024.

higher education institutions with unionized faculty or part-time faculty in Maryland and that number will only grow over the next few years.²

Faculty play a critical role in student success and well-being. By developing coursework, offering extra learning opportunities, and providing mentorship, they are extremely influential in the lives of students. Their dedication extends far beyond the classroom, helping students navigate academic challenges, career planning, and personal growth. When educators and administration can come to an agreement on terms such as salary, benefits and working conditions, everyone benefits. It is past time for Maryland to allow faculty and all part-time faculty to exercise their right to form and join a union.

For these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable vote on HB 661.

² See Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: The State of Faculty & Part Time Faculty Collective Bargaining in Maryland's Higher Education Institutions³

Maryland University	Faculty Union Name	Part-Time Faculty Union Name
Anne Arundel Community College	SEIU	SEIU 500
Frederick Community College	AFT-MD	AFT-MD
Goucher College	SEIU 500	SEIU 500
Harford Community College	MSEA	MSEA
Howard Community College	AFT-MD	SEIU
Maryland Institute College of Art	SEIU 500	SEIU 500
McDaniel College	SEIU 500	SEIU 500
Montgomery College	AFT-MD	SEIU 500
Wor-Wic Community College	MSEA	MSEA

³ We are aware of workers at other community colleges that are currently signing cards to form and join unions in the coming year.