

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

By Tita Chico, 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 Tita Chico and I am a Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for 19 years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report. The state already grants this right towards nearly every other state employee, as well as the faculty at our community colleges and the non-academic workforce at our 4 year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to the rest of higher education in Maryland.

We need collective bargaining in the University of Maryland System to help improve the state of Maryland's institutions of higher education and the quality of instruction and research that we faculty and our graduate assistants can provide.

With enrollments increasing and the number of tenure track faculty decreasing (by 7%)--alongside a huge growth in the number of administrators (over 40%) since 2015 and a big increase in the number of *non* tenure-track faculty being hired (by 19%)--the daily work of advising our students, developing courses and majors, researching at the highest levels, securing external grants to support research, and running all aspects of our departments and colleges has become untenable for tenure-track faculty. In my department alone, the number of tenure-track faculty has declined by 20% in the last several years, while the workload of the department continues to increase. We are being required to do more and more with less and less. We tenure-track faculty are stretched to the limit.

The university administration continues to operate in a bubble and needs help understanding and recognizing that the people who do the vast majority of the work on campus are overworked and underpaid. Enacting this bill would ensure that all stakeholders on campus work together to build a strong, healthy, and competitive institution.

A robust university needs input from everyone, not just the highly-paid few who are disconnected from the realities of our students and the work of higher education today. Public Universities with collective bargaining (e.g., Rutgers) are better run fiscally and have higher national rankings. Collective bargaining will help the USM to move forward to a prosperous future.

For these reasons, I call for a favorable report.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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