

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

**By Diane Luchese, 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,

I am writing to urge you to support this bill, which would grant collective bargaining rights to faculty and librarians. I am a Towson University Professor who has taught in the University System of Maryland for the past 26 years. Throughout my tenure, I have experienced the absence of collective bargaining as nothing less than unfair. I am writing to request that you consider supporting this basic democratic right for state university faculty/librarians.

I consider myself a dedicated employee of the state, and find value and purpose in my work. I work extremely hard and with passion. I believe so strongly in the value of education; I absolutely love teaching and invest all my energy in providing as much support as I can for our students. While I am not disgruntled nor discontent, I recognize that problematic situations can arise in any place of employment. The occasional frustrations that my faculty colleagues and I experience without the means for support or advocacy often raises situations to the level of unfair. We should have a right to at least come to the table to negotiate those conditions we experience as unacceptable.

I will provide just a few examples I have personally experienced or witnessed in my tenure in which the right to collective bargaining might be/might have been advantageous: 1. Under the O'Malley administration when state employees were 'furloughed' for a few days during three years, although aware of the rationale for that decision to lose pay, we were still forced to teach without pay; (so we could not earn money to make up the difference because our time was still spent teaching); 2. Our 'workload' progressively and subtly increases yearly without extra salary compensation, due to a myriad of reasons, whether from insufficient staffing, part-time employees replacing retiring tenured faculty, or the more recent addition of mandatory individual student advising; 3. In my case, being forced to teach music to groups of students singing toward me in small classrooms without proper ventilation (and unable to open windows) during covid; 4. Many years without COLA adjustments whereby salaries have not kept up with inflation; 5. Difficulty finding qualified and experienced adjuncts who are willing to work for the extremely low pay per each course they teach; 6. Dealing part time adjuncts occasionally left hanging until the last minute without contracts wondering if they will get courses; 7. Witnessing part-time faculty and lecturers in a precarious employment situation feeling unable to risk exercising their right to academic freedom and free speech, 8. Observing the numbers of administrators continually increasing (and receiving high salaries) while the number of tenure track professors as well as badly-needed support staff have decreased, and 9. A watering down of self-governance (while the service/committee work remains, the committee contribution to the actual decision making is vanishing). I fully recognize that my situation is still better than that of other colleagues, especially lecturers and adjuncts. These populations are often afraid to express their concerns without the fear of losing their jobs.

Collective bargaining rights is a necessary step for Maryland university faculty employees to

raise our concerns or bring to light injustices, without fear. The collective voice of faculty has been silenced for too long. Collective bargaining would establish a clearer line of communication and complete transparency between faculty and administration. It would open channels for free speech, conflict resolution, debate, fairness, and equity. These rights should not be too much to ask for. Again, I urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

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