

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

By Kyle Brown, Research 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 Kyle Brown and I am a non-tenure track Research Professor at the University of Maryland Baltimore where I have worked for 4 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. This right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland. I am a researcher that uses ketamine and psychedelics to try and help people with depression feel better. I train half a dozen graduate students, medical students, and postdocs to try and help them help others. Folks are having a tough time economically here, and many of my most esteemed colleagues have recently left UMB, and some departments are having a very tough time filling faculty jobs with good candidates. During my relatively brief time here in Baltimore, I have been personally impacted by my inability to collectively bargain, and it has also pushed me towards exiting. For instance, last year the administration of my School unilaterally revoked my, and all other non-tenure track research faculty's, chance to receive a performance-based bonus. This performance-based bonus was written into my contract, so I was very surprised by this unexpected move. When I signed on as a research professor, a part of my reason for joining my colleagues here at UMB was because I was told that if I worked with my colleagues and we performed beyond expectations by producing innovative results, presenting those results at conferences, spending a lot of time mentoring students, etc. then we would be rewarded with a pay increase for our hard work. But that financial incentive I was striving towards was suddenly revoked with no input from myself or any of my colleagues. My direct supervisor told our administration that I performed beyond his expectations and that, as detailed in my contract, I deserved the performance incentive. They didn't have to answer him. I also pursued dialogue from our administration, but they did not respond to me either. I pursued options for collectively bargaining with colleagues impacted by this all across UMB, but we do not have the ability to collectively bargain. I don't think that's right. I may have a nice degree, but I am not a wealthy man. In economic times like these, I was counting on that pay increase. It is hard to trust that the institution has my back when these kinds of decisions are made with no way to have dialogue with the administration. I need to trust the institution I seek tenure at. I also don't think it makes sense for front-line researchers at a major research institution to have no performance-based financial incentive. Why work hard if there is no reason to? To me, that's a disgrace, and goes against the fabric I am shot through with. I think one-sided decisions that discourage innovation & hard work would be tougher to make if faculty could collectively bargain as outlined in this bill. I need your help here. I call on members of the committee to please issue a favorable report on this bill. For decades Maryland institutions have positioned themselves to attract strong faculty candidates that complete innovative research. Results from this research make Maryland richer and its people better. Allowing collective bargaining as outlined in this bill will help retain current researchers like myself and draw in other excellent candidates to this state. Attracting good candidates is critical for innovative researchers because we work together every day, and if I don't have good collaborators nearby, my research will be

weaker, and I will go somewhere else that has better opportunities. Again, I hope you will write a favorable report for this Bill.

Sincerely,

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