

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

By Jennifer Lyn Patterson, Specialist

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 Jen Patterson, and I am a Specialist in the Division of IT at the University of Maryland, College Park where I have worked for over 26 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. It is clear that this right should be extended to all higher ed workers in Maryland.

In addition to my full-time exempt bargaining position at UMD, I worked as a part-time adjunct teaching online classes from 2021-2023. The work was very time consuming, and the pay was low, especially considering the level of education and experience required in order to qualify for the job. In addition, the amount of time required in front of my computer screen led to problems with my back, neck, shoulders, and eyes, problems I never had prior to taking the adjunct position. I gained a new appreciation for the health and safety concerns adjuncts face.

I support this Bill, because collective bargaining gives our Maryland higher education faculty and librarians a way to resolve the unique problems they face on the job, problems that other campus constituents often do not face. Also, collective bargaining can help reverse attacks on higher education by allowing faculty and students an independent collective voice. As the Free State, our Maryland needs to put safeguards in place to protect the free speech and free circulation of ideas that must happen in our public education systems and especially in our institutions of higher education, where adults should have their ideas questioned and expanded through interactions with experts and the ideas experts bring to the table. Collective bargaining for our faculty and librarians is one of the safeguards we Marylanders need.

Members of the Committee, this state has for decades viewed collective bargaining between state employees and management as the best way to promote democracy in our workplaces and public institutions. The right to collective bargaining has long been recognized as not only a fundamental human right, but also as the best method of ensuring that employee voices play a vital role in constructing conditions that govern our workplaces. It is a right granted to many other public higher ed institutions in the nation, and indeed to many private, prestigious institutions in our own state. The reasons to exempt four-year public higher ed institutions from this path make no sense. I again therefore call for a favorable report to this Bill.

Sincerely,

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