

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

**By Asim Ali, Senior Lecturer**

**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 Asim Ali, and I am a Senior Lecturer at the University of Maryland. I am a full-time, non-tenure track professor, and have held this position for seven years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report on this Bill. The state already grants the right of collective bargaining to nearly every other state employee, including faculty at our community colleges and non-academic employees at our four-year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to all higher education workers in Maryland.

Most of the faculty--over two-thirds--at the University of Maryland are not tenure-track faculty. Many of these faculty are effectively pieceworkers: some are paid to teach one class at a time, some are on short-term contracts, and some do not have health benefits or even make a living wage. I consider myself one of the lucky few of these non-tenure track employees, since I do have full-time employment with benefits and an income slightly above PG county's median. Nonetheless, the fact that the large majority of our faculty do not have tenure protections--and many do not even have job stability from one semester to the next--has resulted in a precarious situation for all faculty. The majority of faculty do not have institutional knowledge, and the university has no commitment to them. This means that the minority of full-time faculty must do all of the work that was once spread out among all of the faculty--virtually all of whom were, some decades ago, tenure-track. Hence, the work of advising students, serving on committees, writing letters of recommendation, working with students on their research projects, and completing ever-increasing administrative tasks must be completed by an ever-shrinking pool of permanent faculty.

In other words, our university administration has cut labor costs by making most faculty non-tenure track, and in the process increased the faculty workload for a minority of faculty, increased the job insecurity of a majority of faculty, and decreased the ability of the faculty to engage in sustained research and instruction. The university is, frankly, collapsing under the weight of its own administrative bloat. The mission of the university--research and instruction for the benefit of everyone--has become untenable due to a constantly shrinking ratio of full-time faculty to students.

This is a bad situation not only for faculty but--because working conditions are learning conditions--for students as well. Shared governance cannot fix this, because shared governance represents a minority of faculty and results only in non-binding advice to a university president who is free to ignore it. What is needed to fix this is a collective faculty voice to improve faculty working conditions and hence improve the ability of faculty --who are, after all, the experts in such matters--to fulfill the mission of the university.

In closing, I would ask members of the assembly to consider the following. Maryland 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 education institutions in the nation--including all of those that the University of Maryland considers its "aspirational peers"--and indeed to many private, prestigious institutions in our own state. The reasons to exempt four-year public higher education institutions from collective bargaining are apparently arbitrary and capricious. I therefore call for a favorable report to this Bill.

Sincerely,

Asim Ali, Senior Lecturer  
Home Campus: University of Maryland, College Park  
Department of American Studies  
7901 Regents Drive, College Park, MD, 20740  
aali@umd.edu

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