

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

**By Antoine Borrut, Associate 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 Antoine Borrut and I am an Associate Professor of History at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I have worked for 16 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. I am fortunate to be a tenured faculty member, but I am deeply concerned about recent trends in higher education. The growing administrative burden imposed on all faculty by the university poses significant challenges: the reporting culture and corporatization of higher education more broadly simply distracts faculty from their core missions of teaching and producing new knowledge. It also severely undermines shared governance by imposing pointless layers of administration that disregard due process or overturn decisions made by the University Senate. It also directs university resources to high-level administrators rather than to all faculty and students, an issue that has been highlighted in many studies and reports about this university. The illusion that faculty members can adequately divide their work between research, teaching, and service has become a treacherous illusion. This is particularly frustrating given that tenure, promotion, and merit are based almost exclusively on research. Seniority also means a significant increase in service and administrative duties, which further detract from research. The situation is particularly challenging for women and contingent faculty, who are expected to perform a disproportionate share of service. The university has also increasingly relied on contingent faculty, who have no job security and must teach a ridiculous number of courses to barely make ends meet. This erosion of tenure has massive consequences for faculty and students alike. Graduate students also need better protections to restore manageable workloads and a decent income, especially given the cost of living in the DC area. This should be seen as a top priority to improve the standing of the university. The specific situation of international graduate students should also be considered, as they are deprived of many opportunities due to visa restrictions. These are just some of the most pressing issues we face today. Each would require a longer development, but they all have a common solution: collective bargaining rights would be a crucial step in addressing these pressing issues. Collective bargaining democratizes workplaces, and we must demonstrate our commitment to it in every area of our common life at this historic moment when democracy is under threat in crucial places. 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.*