

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the Maryland
Senate Finance Committee
Feb 18 2025
Faculty Collective Bargaining Bill**

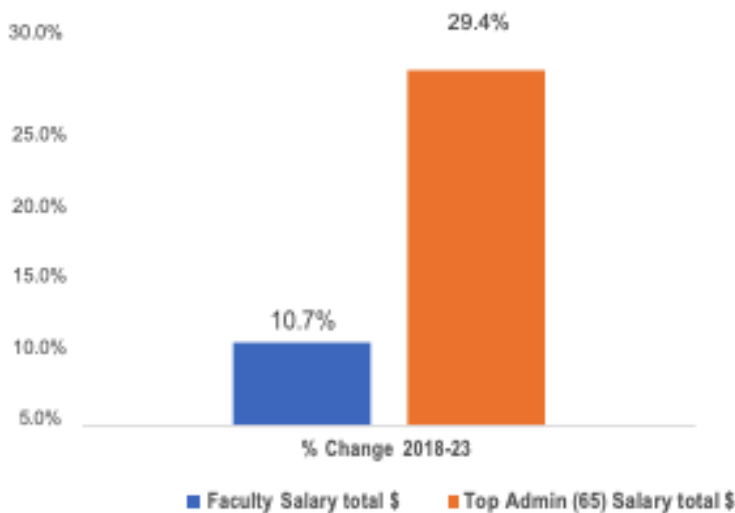
Good afternoon Chair Senator Biedel and members of the Senate Finance Committee

My name is Dr. Ryan Alan Sporer I am a professor at Salisbury University, where I teach Sociology. I have been at SU since 2018. I am working with my colleagues and AFT Maryland to secure collective bargaining rights through SB750 AND HB661. As faculty, I am one of only a very few Maryland public employees without these rights.

I have enjoyed my time working with colleagues and the students of Maryland and look forward to continuing to do so in the foreseeable future. However, the lack of a collective bargaining unit has made my job more difficult. Recent retirements in my department and the new organization of pin lines under the president's office has made replacement more difficult as there has also been a hiring freeze. The sociology department is essentially undergoing a quiet reduction, whereby the department will be 40% understaffed. This is on top of plans to increase class sizes and a normalization of teaching overloads. Lastly due to the lack of replacing key faculty, the remaining faculty must teach in courses in areas they have never taught. Each of these realities individually and collectively will affect the quality of education, the workload, and morale.

The faculty senate has not produced any noticeable improvements to my working conditions since I have joined SU. My first few years I attended many of the senate meetings, thinking this was an avenue for shared governance. I was wrong. Take for instance the faculty finance oversight committee. For at least 4 years and through two different university administrations, nothing has come from this work. A report was created by the committee showing how the priorities of SU have been lopsided in favor of administration over faculty. This is seen in the total salary percent change.

Faculty vs. Top Admin Total Salary \$ change %, 2018 -23



While the administration did reply to this, challenging how positions were operationalized and the partial nature of the data, they did not disclose that for years the faculty finance oversight committee was not received all requested data nor in a timely manner. This and other potential issues were mentioned, to which the committee responded in writing, yet there has been no response to this response. Even if there is, it is clear that the senate has no power to do anything about budgets and funding priorities. This is illustrative of the lack of voice and effectual communication given the unevenness of the relationships between faculty/faculty senate and administration.

A collective bargaining unit could reinforce the ideals of shared governance. This is the conclusion of research into this question. For instance, Rossmann (2025) in his research on perceptions of unionization on faculty senates concludes, “The findings are clear that unionization has had a positive impact on shared governance, working conditions, and salaries” (176).¹

It is well understood that Salisbury University is a key institution on the eastern shore. Cars with SU stickers abound and chats with people from barbers to dentists often reveal a familial connection to the university. Salisbury University plays a vital role in the eastern shore community, serving as a hub of education, opportunity, and regional engagement. However, ensuring the long-term success of SU—and the quality of education it provides—requires that faculty have a real voice in shaping their working conditions and the future of the institution. The right to collectively bargain, a right already granted to most Maryland public employees and community colleges in the state, is essential to achieving this. Through collective bargaining, faculty can advocate not only for fair working conditions but also for the sustainability and advancement of Salisbury University as a premier institution of higher learning.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support SB750 and HB661 to ensure that faculty have the rights and voice they deserve. **Faculty’s working conditions are students’ learning conditions.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Sporer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" and last name "Sporer" clearly legible.

Dr. Ryan Alan Sporer
Salisbury University

¹ Rossmann, B. W. (2024). *Faculty members’ perceptions of the impact of unionization on shared governance* (Doctoral thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada).