

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee**

By Sarah Hovde

SB0750

State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty

February 20, 2025

FAVORABLE

Good afternoon Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee.

My name is Sarah Hovde, and I am a cataloging librarian at the University of Maryland Libraries, where I have worked for almost five years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to 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.

As a cataloging librarian, I ensure access to the Libraries' collections by making resources discoverable to students, scholars, and even members of the public. I work with audiovisual materials and rare and special collections, both of which require specialized knowledge to describe. Rare materials cataloging, in particular, is an act of scholarship in itself, in addition to the scholarly work that is then based on these materials. The records I create and enhance are added to the OCLC WorldCat shared database, where they are then accessible to librarians and users at approximately 16,000 member libraries around the world. I and my cataloging colleagues also contribute records to a number of national and international programs, such as the Library of Congress' Cataloging-in-Publication program (which provides metadata for books about to be published, making them more discoverable to other librarians but also to booksellers and readers) and Name Authority and Bibliographic databases. In addition to my work as a cataloging librarian, I also supervise a graduate assistant, and do my best to ensure that my GA has access to both educational opportunities and practical training and experience that will position her to succeed in librarianship. This component of my work is especially meaningful for me, as I also worked as a graduate assistant and teaching assistant while I attended the University of Maryland between 2011 and 2013. My time as a graduate assistant with the Libraries introduced me to the area of librarianship that I now specialize in (special collections cataloging) and provided me with valuable experience. I am grateful to be able to "pay it forward," but would benefit from more support for myself and other librarians, to be able to in turn support our graduate assistants and fellow workers.

As the Maryland-DC region is rich with GLAM (galleries, libraries and museums) institutions, the University of Maryland needs to be able offer competitive positions. In my time with the Libraries, at least eight librarians in my division alone have departed for more favorable working conditions, from higher salaries to a more balanced workload, at other libraries (not including colleagues in other library divisions who have also left for better opportunities). The majority of these librarians held managerial or supervisory roles with heavy workloads, and had attained permanent status. Several of these positions have not been replaced: instead, units have been rearranged around the gaps, and the managerial and administrative responsibilities have been redistributed to other librarians with already full workloads. As librarians, we are deeply committed to the success of students, colleagues, and the university as a whole. However, we cannot sustainably meet our own high expectations unless we are able to attract and retain skilled employees and maintain fair workloads and fair compensation for all of us. Implementing collective bargaining could help librarians, along

with all full-time and part-time faculty members, postdoctoral associates, and graduate assistants, achieve fairer salaries and workloads, which will help the Librarians retain skilled librarians, balance our workloads, and continue our excellent track record of supporting the educational mission of the University.

Both the University Senate and the Library Assembly (the Libraries' shared governance body) provide avenues for discussion of faculty affairs, but both are limited in the actions that they can take to change material conditions in the workplace. University administration has shown little interest in addressing the challenge of retaining skilled librarians in a region with many competitive opportunities for librarianship, and has shown little support for comprehensive efforts to address salary compression.

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,

Sarah Hovde
Home Campus: University of Maryland, College Park
University Libraries
University of Maryland, College Park
7901 Regents Drive, College Park, MD 20740
sehovde1@gmail.com

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