

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Finance Committee,

On behalf of UAW Local 2750, we write in strong support of Senate Bill 84 granting collective bargaining rights to graduate workers at the University of Maryland. We represent approximately 5,000 Fellows at the National Institutes of Health. Our membership has passed a resolution in solidarity with UMD graduate workers, and passing this legislation is a key legislative priority for our local.

Maryland is home to a growing community of unionized higher education workers. With UAW Local 2750 and Johns Hopkins postdoctoral workers, there are now around 6,500 higher education workers represented by UAW in Maryland. Our collective bargaining agreements strengthen not only our own workplaces but the entire research ecosystem across the state. When graduate workers at UMD gain the right to organize, they will join a powerful network of unionized researchers working together to protect Maryland's position as a national leader in scientific research and innovation.

Our union's experience demonstrates the critical importance of collective bargaining rights for research workers. When federal Reductions in Force (RIFs) threatened workers across the country last year, Maryland was especially heavily affected. Without union protections, many NIH Fellows would have faced job loss during the RIFs, a loss that would have devastated both individual researchers and Maryland's research strength; however, no one in our bargaining unit was terminated.

Beyond protecting our own jobs, we fought hard for NIH funding, which brings billions of dollars to Maryland's economy and supports thousands of jobs across the state. This fight was only possible because we had the collective power and organizational infrastructure that comes with union representation. Graduate workers at UMD deserve these same tools to advocate for their profession and their community.

University of Maryland graduate workers have demonstrated overwhelming and sustained support for unionization, more than 60% signed union authorization cards, over 1,000 workers participated in an informational picket last spring, and another 1,000+ turned out for a majority march this fall. Despite this clear mandate, these workers remain blocked from exercising their fundamental right to collective bargaining because of outdated state legislation.

In this moment of ongoing assaults on labor rights and threats to scientific research, solidarity between Maryland's higher education workers is more important than ever. Graduate workers at UMD have earned the right to collectively bargain through their demonstrated support and organizing strength. Maryland should lead the nation in

supporting scientific workers, not lag behind states that already grant these fundamental rights.

We urge the Maryland General Assembly to pass Senate Bill 84 granting collective bargaining rights to University of Maryland graduate workers. Maryland's research community will be stronger when all of its workers have the power to negotiate for the protections and support they deserve.

In solidarity,

UAW Local 2750