

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
SB0006**

State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Nontenure Track Faculty

February 05, 2026

FAVORABLE

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

My name is Dr. Amanda Dotson. I have been a yearly contractual lecturer at Morgan State University in the Department of Physics and Engineering Physics since 2017. I am working with my colleagues and AFT Maryland to secure collective bargaining rights. This bill provides non-tenure track faculty the right to engage in collective bargaining, a right that Maryland university faculty currently do not have, yet many federal employees, Maryland state employees such as community college faculty, members of the non-academic workforce at Maryland four-year institutions do, as well as university faculty members in 25 states and Washington DC. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill.

I am proud to work at Morgan State University and feel like I am a vital part of the campus community through my teaching and work with students outside the classroom as a mentor, informal advisor, and club advisor. My contract is for 12 credits per semester, which typically works out to four courses. For the past four years I have also voluntarily taken on an extra three or four credit "overload" course to help support the department, bringing my course load to 5 courses. During the current semester I am responsible for teaching 17 credits. I teach many core courses in my department: stellar astronomy (which fulfills a physical science credit for non-science majors), Algebra-based physics 1 and 2 (required for biology majors), calculus-based physics 1 and 2 (required for physics, math, engineering, and chemistry majors), and astrophysics (an upper-level elective for physics majors). I hold regular office hours for all classes, where students can come for homework help, clarification on class topics, or just a place to grab a snack (which I pay for out of my own pocket) and focus on any work they need to do. My students are the focus of my job and the driving force behind doing what I do.

In addition to my teaching duties, I am the faculty advisor for two on campus clubs (Astronomy Association and the Crochet Club), and head the department curriculum committee. I also support my department in liaising with adjunct faculty, helping them with getting course materials, set up their Canvas online learning platforms, and being a point of contact who can be easily reached to answer any questions they may have about their courses, responsibilities, or department procedures. I mentor students in their search for summer internships, course selection, and future career planning, and have brought students to networking events. I write between 3 and 5 letters of recommendation for students every semester to help them secure scholarships, research opportunities, and internships. I am a co-writer and investigator on grants being used to improve our academic infrastructure for current students increase recruitment of Baltimore City Students into the field of physics. I am one of two leads of our Physics Tutorial Center, where I supervise student peer tutors and offer tutoring to any physics student who needs help. I also serve as academic advisor for 25 students

I have no job security. My contract is a 9.5 month contract that is renewed yearly. There is no guarantee my position will be renewed, despite my very active 9 years spent teaching at Morgan State University. My current 9.5-month salary is approximately \$51,000. If I were single and did not have a partner who was comfortable with the income inequality between us, I would not be able to afford rent or a mortgage and would struggle to live on my own. I did

not enter this profession with the intention of becoming wealthy, however I believe I deserve to be able to support myself.

I am one of the few lecturers who have access to subsidized health benefits. A large percentage of these instructors and lecturers (many who have been at Morgan State for a number of years) do not have this benefit nor others such as retirement. The ability to bargain as a collective will provide us with a way to work with administration as a collective to address these issues. Lecturers have no opportunity for career advancement or promotion and no way to collectively request that a process be established. There is no defined process for promotion of instructors, leaving us with no career ladder at an institution we have made our careers. Although this issue has been brought up, the shared governance of the university has not addressed these problems, and we only receive lip service from the administration saying that they will "look into these issues."

I am fortunate in that my current department chair understands the critical role I play in the department and feel confident that I will receive a new contract each year. This, however, is not the same as job security nor is it able to help the other faculty members who may not have the same relationship with their department heads. Many faculty members in similar positions as myself are afraid to speak up to administration about issues of job security, a lack of a career ladder, and lack of adequate benefits and pay. The right to collective bargaining will not immediately cause all universities to unionize; this will be voted on by the faculty of each campus and even on unionized campuses, faculty can decline to join a union. Collective bargaining will not guarantee an exorbitant base salary or benefits; it will provide a way to address administration as a unified collective. Having the right to collective bargaining will give us equal footing with administration and allow us to speak with a unified voice about our needs as lecturers and faculty members, something that is not currently done under shared governance. Students deserve to have instructors that are not overloaded with courses, that feel they have job security, have a reasonable salary and health benefits. When we, the faculty, are supported in this way, we can do a better job of teaching, mentoring, and leading our students. When the faculty are empowered, students will also benefit.

Morgan State fills a vital role within Baltimore City giving students from all walks of life access to a college education. The faculty at Morgan State strive to support the students and aid in graduating future generations of social workers, journalists, teachers, engineers, and scientists. Giving university faculty the right to decide if they want to engage in collective bargaining, a right afforded to almost all other Maryland Public Employees, will give us access to a voice that we currently are exempted from. I support this bill wholeheartedly to support not only the advancement of my own career, in support of being more available to the students and the overall advancement of Morgan State University. Again, I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this Bill.

Sincerely,

Amanda Dotson
adotson52@gmail.com

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