

**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 Bishop Marcus Johnson. I am the Pastor of New Harvest Ministries, in southeast Baltimore, where I have been the pastor for 26 years. I am a proud graduate of Morgan State University and the University of Baltimore. I am a pastor to faculty, students and staff across USM institutions in Baltimore City. Public Universities in Baltimore, like Coppin State, Morgan State, and the University of Baltimore have done so much to improve the lives of everyday working class people. My congregation is a testimony to that. However, I believe these institutions can do more for the community by recognizing the fundamental rights of their faculty to collectively bargain for better wages and working conditions. I urge the committee to issue a favorable report for this bill.

I have built my ministry around the teachings of Jesus Christ. As I write this testimony in support of collective bargaining, I reflect on Jesus' teaching in the Gospel of Matthew, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? ... 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" This principle, rooted in justice and humility, is a core rubric for how I live in service to Jesus, by attending first to the voices of the people that our society often ignores, often because of the economic and political power that they are denied in an unjust world.

Applying this principle to the University, I believe "the least of them" refers to the non-tenure track majority of faculty that provide critical labor and service to their students, institutions and communities, many of whom lack job security, liveable wages, and office space. "The least of them" refers to the thousands of faculty across the USM that provide the most essential labor of the university, but lack official recognition of their rights to have a say in their working conditions. They are not "the least" because they matter less to the critical mission of our universities, quite the contrary. They are not "the least" because they labor less. Our non-tenure track faculty often teach more and write more grants out of necessity. They are "the least", only in the sense of the precarious structure under which they labor, semester-after-semester. But, they are also the most of us in their numbers. They are the most of us in the number of students they teach, the number of papers they grade, the number of hours they commit to labs and research centers across the USM, the amount of service that they do to keep our universities functioning.

I believe that collective bargaining is a fundamental democratic right that all University faculty and staff should have. This bill makes a tremendous contribution to move us closer to that goal. By recognizing the right of non-tenure track faculty to decide for themselves whether and when to exercise their right to collective bargaining, our state senators and delegates will empower the most of us.

I urge our senators to support this bill and our delegates to support this bill, providing the rights of non-tenure track faculty across the USM to collectively bargain.

Sincerely,

Bishop Marcus Johnson
New Harvest Ministries
revmarcj@gmail.com

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