

**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 Michael Lavery, and I am a tenure-track professor in the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am working with my colleagues in United Academics of Maryland-University of Maryland, an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers, to secure collective bargaining rights for faculty in Maryland's public four-year institutions. Since I began working as an Assistant Professor of Russian at UMD two and a half years ago, I have understood that I am one of only very few Maryland public employees without these rights.

Most of my responsibilities involve the Russian program at UMD. Ours is a small program -- my colleagues currently include one tenured professor, two PTK faculty, and one adjunct instructor. In our program, our PTK faculty teach the majority of lower-level language courses, mentor students (at times both formally and informally), write letters of recommendation, and help organize cultural programming--often without formal recognition in workload calculations. Following the unexpected death of our program head, a tenured professor, in 2024, our program has had to hire an adjunct instructor on a semester-per-semester (or even course-per-course) basis, with renewed hiring subject to budget constraints at the university and school level. Despite this uncertainty, they remain deeply committed to our students and our program. It is difficult to explain to students why the faculty member who teaches them may not know if they will have a job the following semester.

While non-tenure-track faculty are among the most vulnerable, tenure-track faculty are also affected by the absence of collective bargaining. Shared governance at UMD is advisory; final authority rests with senior administrators. Faculty Senate votes can be overturned. Decisions affecting workload, evaluation, and program stability are made without binding faculty input. In a small program like ours, when PTK faculty face instability, it affects our ability to plan curricula, recruit students, and sustain long-term initiatives. Our working conditions are inseparable.

Our department prepares students for careers in government, education, international affairs, and public service. Many of our graduates have gone on to work in federal agencies located in Maryland and Washington, D.C. The stability of our faculty directly impacts the quality of education we provide to the state's students.

It is through the right to collectively bargain--a right afforded to nearly all other Maryland public employees--that faculty will finally have a meaningful voice in decisions that shape our working conditions and, in turn, our students' education. Non-tenure-track faculty deserve stability and dignity. I urge you to support collective bargaining rights for Maryland's public university faculty.

Sincerely,

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