

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee  
From: Shubh Agnihotri  
01/27/2025  
RE: SBO084 - SUPPORT

Members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Shubh Agnihotri and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, College Park. I serve on the Student Government Association as the director of Transportation & Infrastructure.

Our graduate workers at UMD are vital to the success of the undergraduate students around them. They are the most knowledgeable, kind, and helpful people I have met in my classes here. But without collective bargaining rights, grad workers are dependent on non-guaranteed jobs, low wages and poor benefits compared to our peer institutions. Their top priority should be their professional development, research and happiness, not whether they are able to put food on the table for their families. Graduate workers access the campus food pantry at a higher rate than undergraduate students do and the pantry has begged us in SGA for funding this year. New graduate worker housing built by the university is prohibitively expensive for most grads based on their wages. Many international graduate workers are also hurt without a union because the uncertainty of wages and assistant positions affects them much more severely.

SGA has attempted twice to urge UMD and the University System of Maryland to voluntarily recognize the Graduate Labor Union at UMD. Each time SGA and grad workers meet with UMD or USM officials we have been treated like children and told by each office we meet that they have no power to change anything. They refused to give us the dignity of a response to the letter we prepared, even following a meeting, and insinuated that the SGA has an equivalent lobbying power to the USM. President Darryll Pines seems deeply offended when it is suggested that graduate workers are underpaid and struggling to make ends meet. **It is clear that we have exhausted the internal methods for change on this issue and there is no solution but legislation.** Senate Bill 84 is desperately needed to force all USM institutions to recognize Graduate Labor Unions in each system school. A unionized graduate worker body is a strong graduate worker body. Our state budget and USM spending should never be balanced upon the backs of graduate workers again.

I urge a favorable committee report on SBO084. Thank you for your work on the Finance Committee and for your consideration of this testimony.