

My name is Dr. Caitlin Corona-Long, and I am a Postdoctoral Fellow at the NIH. My research focuses on identifying neuroanatomical changes underlying differing outcomes in cognitive aging, particularly as it relates to memory and neurodegenerative disorders. I am also a proud Union organizer with NIH Fellows United/UAW2750. I am writing to strongly support the unionization efforts of University of Maryland graduate workers.

For most of my PhD studies at Johns Hopkins University, I was not a unionized worker. It wasn't until the last year of my PhD that other graduate workers gathered together and organized to improve working conditions across all Hopkins campuses. Becoming unionized was life-changing for me as an individual worker. I finally made enough money to pay rent and other expenses, allowing me to focus more on my research. Being unionized facilitated the most productive year of my graduate studies.

I was ecstatic to join the NIH and join thousands of other scientists doing life-saving research. As a unionized federal worker, my union has allowed me to focus on my research amidst these unprecedented attacks on science. I know my rights as a worker, and I work with other members to make sure that each Fellow we represent knows that they have a right to a safe and stable working environment.

Being a unionized worker allows me to reach my full potential as a scientist. For this reason alone, I support the passing of SBO84. Passing this bill will not just improve the lives of graduate student workers, but enrich the world they are tirelessly working to improve.