

**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 Kelsey McGurrin. I am a full-time non-tenure-track faculty member of the Department of Entomology at University of Maryland, College Park. I am working with my colleagues in United Academics of Maryland (UAM), an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), to secure collective bargaining rights for faculty in Maryland's public four-year institutions. As a Faculty Specialist who has worked for the university for 7 years and a proud Maryland resident for 6 years, I am one of only very few Maryland public employees without these rights.

While all faculty deserve collective bargaining rights, non-tenure-track faculty like me are among the most vulnerable. As a Faculty Specialist, I help plan and implement research projects, mentor graduate and undergraduate students, and disseminate findings to community members. Our research on plant-insect interactions in human managed landscapes has very real world applications for sustainable landscaping, urban tree maintenance, and quality of life.

Unfortunately, my position is completely grant funded. Even before the current federal administration slashed funding for science, my job security was low, operating one year at a time. Now my position is even less secure, as environmental science grants are much harder to win. A related struggle I face is that because most faculty in my department do not have Assistants or Specialists working for them, I don't have peers or any sort of formal work assignment or evaluation processes. Most other Faculty Assistants I have met quit within a couple of years because the pay is low and career advancement opportunities are unclear and/or non-existent. I have remained because I believe the work we are doing is important. With so much turnover in students and postdocs over the years, I can also embody institutional knowledge for our projects. I deserve to be treated as a professional with 14 years of experience, not as a disposable seasonal technician.

In my 7 years working for the University of Maryland I have tried to investigate and organize to make working conditions better for myself and people like me. Because my position falls into a weird gray area, however, this has been really hard. I am not a professor, so in common operations I am not faculty. Yet I am not funded by the state, so I am not staff either. Having collective bargaining rights would help me to win a living wage and solidify the importance of my position as a non-tenure-track faculty member.

I am proud of the research, Extension, and mentoring work that I am able to do through the University of Maryland. I hope that my right to collectively bargain--a right afforded almost all other Maryland Public Employees and USM peer institutions--will allow me, other non-tenure-track faculty, and, hopefully soon, all faculty, to have the voice we deserve.

Sincerely,

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