

**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 Nicholas Callahan. I am a full-time assistant research scientist at University of Maryland, College Park. My designation is professional track (PTK) faculty. 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 member at IBBR Shady Grove, I am one of only very few Maryland public employees without collective bargaining rights.

I work on research collaborations between College Park and the federal Department of Commerce. Beyond the value of the research itself, part of my responsibilities is to train undergraduate students and interns in biotechnology techniques, in order to build the biotech workforce in Maryland. My position is vulnerable to recent instability in federal funding and to rising costs, both for our laboratory facilities and my personal expenses. Our institute's facilities budget is insufficient to maintain a functional biological lab environment. The last raise for university employees were insufficient to keep up with the rising cost of housing and groceries. I am at a diminished capacity to do my job and at threat of being priced out of the DMV area. I am not unique; with disruptions to federal funding, Maryland is in danger of a scientific brain drain.

Additionally, federal skepticism towards virology and vaccine development means that essential biotechnology work is now threatened. I believe that this is no different from any other academic freedom issue. A broad standard must be set and defended. To that end, both tenure and non-tenure faculty need the job protections afforded by a collective contract in order to maintain academic freedom. This is a matter of not only academic ethics, but economic and medical impact.

PTK faculty need a strong voice in the budget priorities of their home institutions now more than ever. The College Park Faculty Senate is only capable to issues non-binding recommendations. We need a collective bargaining unit to give our voices weight in the budgeting conversation and to secure academic freedom.

Sincerely,

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