

**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 Robert Birt and I am professor of philosophy at Bowie State University (BSU) where I have been teaching full time since 2008. I am also President of the BSU chapter of the AAUP.

The right to collectively bargain in this state applies to most state employees, including faculty at community colleges. While there are good reasons why this right should also be extended to all faculty labor in higher education in Maryland, with this testimony I am asking for your support for bargaining rights for non-tenure track faculty.

My call for granting collective bargaining rights to university faculty is based on the need to strengthen academic freedom, provide faculty with meaningful voice, and dignify the labor of all instructors, including part-time faculty.

The principles of academic freedom and shared governance, which are informed by AAUP policy, are a part of the bylaws of the University System of Maryland as well as faculty handbooks across the state. They allot primary responsibility to faculty in academic matters such as the content of courses; the hiring, evaluation, and promotion of faculty; and program development.

These are good policies. However, shared governance is advisory, depending on the good will of the administration. The bottom line is that the administration makes the decisions. There have been occasions at BSU, when administration refused to recognize the elected members of the faculty senate or appointed advisory committees that circumvented shared governance bodies and procedures. In 2010, flagrant abuses by a newly appointed provost led to severe tensions and even open opposition with the faculty.

Shared governance is not a replacement for bargaining. It works side-by-side with bargaining. Bargaining provides true voice.

Non-tenure track faculty, are not always a part of shared governance, as flawed as shared governance is. Even where non-tenure track faculty participate with shared governance, their lack of job stability oftentimes hinders one from speaking out. As the lack of job stability limits true academic freedom.

Moreover, in addition to the lack of job stability, non-tenure track faculty are most often under compensation, over worked, and receive little support from administration,

I urge you to support collective bargaining for non-tenure track faculty for all the reasons listed above.

Sincerely,

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