

**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 Akim Reinhardt and I am a Professor of History at Towson University. This is my 25th year at Towson; I began as a tenure track assistant professor just before 9-11. While all faculty deserve bargaining rights, I am honored to present testimony to the Maryland Senate Finance Committee in support of this bill, which would allow full and part-time non-tenure track faculty to form a union.

I am very fortunate. I am among the dwindling percentage of college and university instructors who was allowed the opportunity to earn tenure. As a result, I have health insurance subsidized by my employer; I receive pension contributions and a fair salary; and if Towson University administrators decide not to renew my contract, they must show cause. In other words, I have the same level of job security as most Maryland state employees, and rightly so. I earned my job and I have performed well, with years of documentation to that effect. The university cannot fire me for no reason.

However, that is not the lived reality of most instructors at Towson University and at the other public two- and four-year campuses in Maryland, and across America. The great majority of instructors are contingent contract workers. They are underpaid; many of them are overworked relative to their wage; they can be fired without cause; and they are increasingly desperate. To provide just one small example of the exploitation that takes place at some Maryland campuses: imagine being paid about four thousand dollars to use your doctoral level expertise to teach Maryland college students and then being forced to pay nearly a hundred dollars just for the right to park at work. Or teach five courses per year in an effort to make a meager living and be forced to pay hundreds for parking. (Towson University Faculty and Staff Permit Types, Rates & Purchases: <https://www.towson.edu/parking/facultystaff/permits.html>.)

Despite the shockingly low wages of adjunct professors, and the fractional salary of non-tenure track faculty compared to tenured and tenure track professors, perhaps the most pressing issue for contingent faculty is their complete lack of job security. And that is the reason I must testify on their behalf; most are too scared to speak out on this bill for fear of being fired. Contingent faculty, whether part-timers or full-timers, are denied even a hint of job security; they can be fired without cause, no reason need be given. Indeed, it has reached the point where university administrators will not even acknowledge the truth of the situation, refusing to admit they fire the employees they fire. Instead, administrators insist that a contingent faculty member's contract has simply not been renewed. As if ending someone's career were the same as opting out of a monthly streaming service. Full-time lecturers and part-time adjuncts are forever asking themselves: Will I have a job next year or even next semester? Their employment, their very livelihood, exists at the mercy and vagaries of administrative decisions that they cannot appeal.

The ranks of contingent faculty have been growing for decades. They teach most of the classes at most colleges and universities. And they deserve and need the right to bargain collectively.

I have spoken to many Maryland citizens over the past year, and almost all of them have the

same reaction. They are shocked to learn that in Maryland, one of the bluest states in this country, where most politicians routinely talk the talk about supporting hard working Marylanders, certain state employees are not allowed to unionize or bargain collectively. How could this be, they often ask me? I wish I could give them an answer that doesn't leave them bewildered and even angry.

What's more, I have spoken with many, many contingent faculty, both adjuncts and lecturers (the latter are now being called Teaching Professors at USM schools, which fools students and parents into thinking schools have more "real" professors and fewer exploited and vulnerable contingent faculty than they actually do). Nearly every single one I've spoken to has numerous complaints about working conditions. And nearly all of them are afraid to voice those concerns for fear of being fired.

And so I present this testimony to you because I can no longer stand by silently as some Maryland politicians publicly claim to champion workers but allow this exploitation to continue. I even heard the staffer of one prominent Maryland Senator, who is publicly very supportive of organized labor, say that what we're talking about regarding contingent faculty is really just an HR issue.

Enough is enough. Faculty at Maryland state universities are some of the only public sector employees in the state who do not have the right to unionize. The people of Maryland need to know what goes on at the colleges and universities they fund with their taxes, tuition, and fees. I feel compelled to engage the democratic process directly, in the name of what is right and on behalf of those who feel they cannot publicly speak for themselves.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Akim Reinhardt
yankeeslim@gmail.com

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