



Written Testimony to the Maryland Senate Finance Committee Submitted by
Towson University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (TU AAUP)
TU AAUP Chapter Secretary, Dr. Katherine Sterner
For a Hearing on

SENATE BILL 06: State Personnel – Collective Bargaining –Nontenure Track Faculty

February 05, 2026

FAVORABLE

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee:

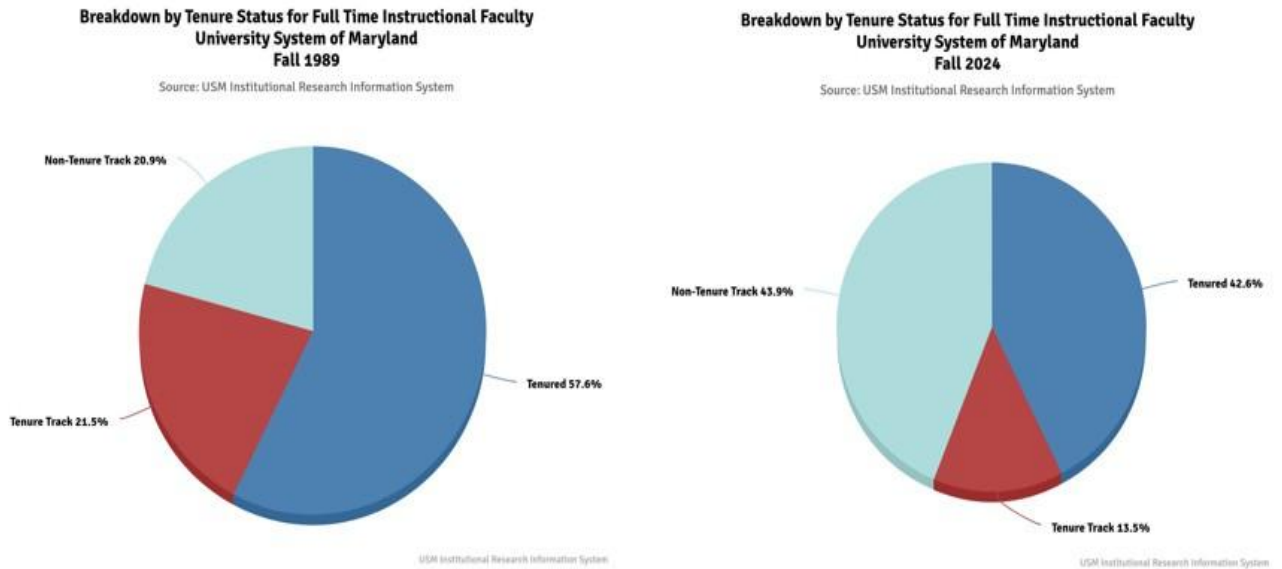
I write on behalf of the TU AAUP Executive Committee (EC) to urge a favorable report on SB 06, a collective-bargaining bill for all nontenure track (NTT) faculty, full-time (FT) and part-time (PT). We confine our comments mainly to the University System of Maryland (USM), which has opposed variations of such a bill for many years. TU AAUP has detailed and explained our support in [previous testimony](#). The AAUP's report on [Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession](#) (2024) also outlines at length the issues in a broader higher education context over the past several decades.

All faculty (indeed, *all* workers) deserve this right regardless of rank or tenure status, and this bill marks an important step towards addressing urgent higher education concerns that impact all Marylanders.

We strongly support this bill for the following reasons:

1. **The USM public institutions are currently the only ones in Maryland that do not allow tenure ineligible faculty to bargain collectively; this bill brings the USM level with existing nontenure track faculty rights in our state.** Legislation passed in 2022 enabled all faculty at community colleges to choose whether to engage in collective bargaining. Prior to that time, federal law implemented through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) enabled nontenure track FT and PT faculty at privates to access this right (and over a decade or so, faculty at MICA, Goucher, McDaniel, and Stevenson have exercised this option). Likewise, we urge that the nontenure track faculty on each USM campus be allowed to decide democratically, too.
2. **Academic freedom is a bread-and-butter issue across all faculty ranks.** Most FT and PT nontenure track faculty serve on limited, short-term contracts, which can be nonrenewed at any time without just cause, no matter length or quality of service. During these politically polarizing times, this has become a civil and constitutional rights crisis in the academic workplace, most especially for nontenure track faculty who lack access to meaningful due process and grievance mechanisms to safeguard their rights.
3. **Nontenured majority signals shared governance is broken.** Shared governance cannot function optimally if most faculty have no stake and no voice in it. The percentage of USM FTNTT faculty has more than doubled from 1989 to 2024 (cf. see pie chart below). This bill incentivizes tenure-

line and tenured hiring, while enabling the nontenure track to option benefits and rights academic professionals need to be effective educators. It also incentivizes converting part-time positions into full-time ones -- as appropriate, if qualified, and when applicable to the educational needs.



4. **Workload fairness requires enabling a bill that includes *all* nontenure track faculty, regardless of job titles, rank or status.** The USM has changed nontenure track job titles multiple times over the past several years, which has become a needlessly confusing reclassification shell game. This dynamic has intensified workloads and unsettled terms of contract, too. The community college bill and federal law avoided exacerbating existing inequalities by including all nontenure track faculty, without making invidious distinctions among the FT and PT. This allows the Maryland Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) and the NLRB to verify eligibility based on actual evidence. This bill should heed precedence and do the same.

5. **A 21st century academic workforce needs collective bargaining to ensure responsive stewardship of educational resources and to protect the independence and long-term well-being of our respective academic institutions.** During uncertain budgetary and political times, this bill comes with a modest (if not neutral) fiscal note: it incentivizes transparent decision-making, while prioritizing principles of academic freedom and shared governance that strengthen the educational mission of our public higher education institutions -- no matter what administrators may come and go and no matter what politicians may govern locally or nationally. It creates more tools to enhance the educational experiences of our students and to work collaboratively when developing our institutional mission to benefit area communities.

The dynamics and severity of the issues may differ among the USM campuses, but faculty across institutional types and ranks largely agree that passing a bill of this kind is necessary and long overdue.

The TU AAUP executive committee thereby enthusiastically reaffirms our chapter's support for this bill. We thank you for your time and ongoing consideration.