

**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 Jennifer Keohane, and I am an associate professor at the University of Baltimore, where I have worked for seven years. I call on this committee to issue a favorable report to this bill. The state already grants this right to nearly every other state employee, as well as the faculty at our community colleges and the non-academic workforce at our 4-year institutions. It is clear that this right should be extended to all faculty in Maryland's institutions of higher ed.

In my role at the University of Baltimore, I teach three classes every semester, and I'm directly responsible for 60-80 students. In addition to teaching my own classes, I direct our program in Oral Communication and the undergraduate program in Digital Communication. In addition to working on learning outcomes and assessment, I staff the oral communication classes by hiring adjuncts and non-tenure track faculty to teach at our campus in Baltimore, in our Second Chance Program in Jessup Correctional Institute, and in our Dual Enrollment courses. Finding new adjuncts is a task made exceptionally difficult by the low rate of pay for part-time faculty, while they are an incredibly valuable part of our workforce and community.

I strongly support the passage of this Bill for three reasons.

1. Collective bargaining can improve the working conditions of our lecturers and part-time faculty. As it is, I struggle to hire part-time faculty to staff our oral communication courses because of the low pay and lack of institutional support. Not only that, I want our valuable part-time faculty to feel comfortable speaking their minds, teaching controversial subjects, and pursuing excellence in their roles. Since they teach so many credit hours, it is important to emphasize that their working conditions are our students' learning conditions. If they had a collective bargaining agreement that facilitated improved working conditions, our departments and university classrooms would reap the benefits. Shared governance does not substitute for collective bargaining, as it is merely advisory.

2. Collective bargaining is a key part of the democratic process in the workplace. Moreover, the fact that other state employees can collectively bargain, while higher ed faculty have been excluded is undemocratic on face. All faculty currently lack voice, regardless of whether they are tenured or not.

3. Collective bargaining streamlines and strengthens relations between administrators and faculty and graduate students. It ensures an efficient process for pursuing accountability when needed. When I was a graduate student in Wisconsin, a state that then allowed collective bargaining, union officials for our graduate student union (including me) met monthly with administrators to enforce our collective bargaining agreement, meetings that were quick, friendly, and had very real impacts on the quality of life of graduate students.

We were able to work with our administrators to track down lost paychecks, ensure healthy and safe environments for graduate student employees, and pursue pay equity among departments.

To conclude, I strongly urge a favorable report to this Bill. This state and many others have for decades viewed collective bargaining between state employees and management as an integral way to foster democracy in the workplace and at institutions of higher learning. Collective bargaining is a fundamental human right that safeguards the employee voice in places of work. Many other public, higher education institutions across the country protect this right for their employees, as do many prestigious, private institutions in our state. I must emphasize that our working conditions are our students' learning conditions. Given that we want Maryland to be a vibrant, educated state ready to meet the demands of the future, I again call for a favorable report to this Bill.

Sincerely,

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