

**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 Miriam DesHarnais. I am a tenured faculty librarian at Towson University. I am working with my colleagues and AFT Maryland to secure collective bargaining rights for non-tenure track faculty. University faculty are some of the very few Maryland public employees without collective bargaining rights.

While all faculty deserve collective bargaining rights, this bill will provide these rights to non-tenure -track faculty. My non-tenure track faculty colleagues are just as qualified as I am. Adjunct faculty have completed long courses of study to become experts in their fields. They are often extremely experienced academics and instructors who have doctoral degrees, years of teaching knowledge and strong professional networks. Our students do not know the difference between tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty. To them their professor is their professor. Unfortunately, adjunct faculty, while offering equal value to students, are generally given heavy courseloads, large class sizes, lower pay, no job security and less support for their work. This is unfair to adjuncts, which should be reason enough to allow them collective bargaining rights. But when working conditions for adjuncts suffer all Maryland citizens should be concerned. We want our state's students to get the best possible education, meaning we do not want high instructor turnover, overworked faculty or burned out leaders and mentors at a time our post-secondary students need stability most.

Without collective bargaining rights faculty lack voice, be they tenured or not. Shared Governance (our Academic Senate) is not a substitute for collective bargaining, as it only covers certain issues and its role is advisory. Ultimately administrators make the final decisions, no matter how unified departmental faculty are on an issue. Even when non-tenure-track faculty are allowed to be involved with shared governance, there are barriers to participation - they have heavy courseloads, may need to work as an adjunct at multiple institutions to afford housing and healthcare, and have to consider their job security before speaking up publicly. Because adjuncts generally do not feel they can speak up forcefully and publicly when something is not working, university decision-makers may miss out on early insights regarding ways a given change (such as increasing the maximum number of students per course) affects the educational experience. In this way, lack of voice for non-tenure-track faculty can impact working conditions for all university faculty.

To conclude, I am proud of my university, my colleagues and our students - part of what makes Towson University special is our focus on our students. Allowing non-tenure-track faculty access to collective bargaining to improve their working conditions is imperative if we want to look after innovation and teaching on campus and as a state. To fight against any faculty having the right to organize is to show a fundamental mistrust of public educators who have, in fact, earned the public's trust. When faculty voices are heard clearly, and backed by the power of collective bargaining, the decision-making process on campuses becomes more equitable and transparent, to the benefit of our students.

Sincerely,

Miriam DesHarnais

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