

**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 Kara Pleasants. I am a full-time non-tenure-track professor of English at University of Maryland, College Park. I am working with my colleagues in United Academics of Maryland (UAM), an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), to secure collective bargaining rights for faculty in Maryland's public four-year institutions. I am a Maryland resident, commuting to the UMD-College Park campus from Harford county, and I am also a Maryland native. I've worked as a public school teacher in the K-12 sector before, where I had collective bargaining rights that made a huge difference for both job security and also pay based on qualifications -- something that as a PTK faculty member I no longer receive.

I think all faculty deserve bargaining rights, but as a non-tenured faculty member I am in a different and more vulnerable position. My pay rate is not comparable to similar peers with the same qualifications. I also have a higher teaching burden than tenure-track faculty, teaching 4 courses per semester to be full-time. Many tenure-track faculty members can teach as few as 1-2 courses. I am not eligible for the same leadership opportunities or grants. I had to work for a very long time at UMD to be able to apply for promotion, which gave me more job security for the first time -- but took 5 years to achieve. Now, I have a 5-year contract. Before I was promoted, I had just a one-year half-time guaranteed contract. As the breadwinner in my family, this was really stressful. I also teach critical general education writing courses at UMD that are programmatically important every single semester -- and they are very grading and writing intensive. Therefore, I teach a wide variety of students with many different needs. I serve the whole student body. And there isn't a good reason why instructors in my position shouldn't have stronger job security earlier in their careers if they meet strong performance criteria.

The promotion criteria for PTK faculty and tenured faculty is also almost the same, even though the benefits are significantly different in terms of workload. I still have to demonstrate, if I want to get promoted again in 5 years, that I will complete mentorship and service to the college, even though I will not necessarily be paid for these efforts or for the time I spend receiving additional training as a strong practitioner. Bargaining rights could improve our pay, improve our workloads, and improve our compensation for current unpaid work.

It would be such a huge support for faculty to be given the right to have bargaining rights-- and a way to really show that you support working people in Maryland.

Sincerely,

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