

TESTIMONY OF TINA M. KELLEHER, PHD  
BEFORE THE  
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE MARYLAND SENATE  
FOR A HEARING ON  
**SB 6: “STATE PERSONNEL –COLLECTIVE BARGAINING – NONTENURE TRACK FACULTY”**

FEBRUARY 05, 2026

**FAVORABLE**

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

My name is Dr. Tina Kelleher and I [link to my previous testimonies](#) that go back to 2012 for perspective on why this bill should be moved. I have served more than twenty-five years at Towson University in a range of roles and am currently Full-Time Nontenure Track faculty. My actual title has changed several times in as many years, despite doing the same job. The USM most recently reclassified lecturers at TU, “Professors of Teaching,” though many policies and web pages refer to nontenure track faculty using a range of different titles, which can be confusing to faculty across all ranks, as well as to our staff and to our students. For instance, the newly created Professors of Teaching designation also comes with ranks of Assistant and Associate; yet these are *not* tenure-track positions. Ranks mirroring the tenure-track ladder are being misleadingly used, while nontenure track faculty continue to be told inconsistent things about their benefits eligibility and workplace rights because of this categorical confusion.

Esteemed Senators, as Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once said, “sunlight is the best disinfectant”: to empower faculty *regardless of job title*, I urge you to enable collective bargaining rights *for all nontenure-track faculty*. As is, according to Towson, I have worked there for three years rather than more than a quarter century when calculating retirement and accumulated sick leave, because the institution only conferred access to such benefits for full-time nontenure track faculty as of 2022 (same year faculty started to organize).

As the first nontenure track faculty member elected to serve on the TU Senate in 2010, I experienced firsthand that many issues raised were *not* things shared governance can address. Tenure-line colleagues routinely had no input, often learning through an email blast or when the senate met, what had already been decided by administrators from an undisclosed star chamber.

This bill does not prescribe unionization; it enables *options to choose* such directions following processes *that already exist* for nontenure track faculty elsewhere in Maryland higher education at both community colleges and private institutions. Creating democratic mechanisms for faculty voices to be heard clearly, collectively, and consistently -- no matter the distracting political noise and no matter the fiscal challenges looming – enables our educational mission to be prioritized, so that our institutions and our students can rise to meet the challenges ahead.

I thank you for your consideration and urge a favorable report on SB 6 in 2026.