

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
HB0106
State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Nontenure Track Faculty
February 10, 2026
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the House Government, Labor and Elections Committee.

My name is Michele M Mason. I am a tenured professor of Japanese Cultural Studies at University of Maryland, College Park. I am working with my colleagues in United Academics of Maryland-University 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. As a faculty member, I have served as the head of the Japanese Program, the Director of the Center for East Asian Studies and many other roles since arriving in 2007. I have reached across area boundaries with colleagues in German and Film at UMD and with colleagues across my discipline on books and other projects. I am also one of the core committee members for UMD's brand new major Global Cultures and Thought. Even though I have lived in Maryland and devoted myself to teaching young people for 20 years now, I am one of only very few Maryland public employees without these rights.

While all faculty deserve collective bargaining rights, non-tenure-track faculty are among the most vulnerable, and I feel they deserve the protection of certain rights as well. The Japanese program relies heavily on PTK faculty who teach Japanese language from 101 to 302, and we could not offer the degree without them. Because they are dedicated to our program, they often go above and beyond to help students thrive in these demanding 6-credit courses and do not get paid for this labor. They deserve a voice and to be able to put forth proposals for how their job titles/requirements could be improved.

Tenure certainly offers me some degree of safety, but I have been in an increasing number of situations where I am concerned about retributions for speaking up. In particular, the process by which the new Plan of Organization for the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures has been muddied and there is widespread concern about who are able to have input. The use of the term "advisory," in particular suggests that we are not full members in making decisions, and has caused some strife and irritations on the part of TTK faculty.

I have been part of union organization since my years as a Ph.D. student. The notion of a university has been denigrated through its intransigent reliance on capitalist models in the past few decades. It is through the right to collectively bargain--a right afforded almost all other Maryland Public Employees and USM peer institutions--that non-tenure-track faculty, and, hopefully soon, all faculty, will have the voice they deserve.

Sincerely,

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