



TESTIMONY FOR SB0084

State Personnel – Collective Bargaining – Graduate Assistants

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kramer

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0084 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists – individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

The rights of workers to organize and to bargain collectively with employers ensures that both workers and management come to the table as equals. Workers have organized in many different industries and have been able to ensure that they have good working conditions, health care, and reasonable wages. It does cost employers more. There is absolutely no argument about that. Employers will always say that they can't afford to have workers organize because it eats into their profits, and often they prevail.

Our members would respectfully ask you to look at this from the side of the workers. Is it right for an employer to pay sub-standard wages, or provide poor working conditions so that THEY can make more profit, at the expense of their workers? A business should be able to pay a decent wage and provide decent working conditions or they don't deserve to be in business. They are leaches.

The same is true at state-run colleges, such as Morgan State University and St. Mary's College of Maryland, which often take advantage of their graduate assistants, who are just learning to negotiate. Colleges should not be operating by taking advantage of workers. They should be enthusiastic in their support for good working conditions and good wages and should welcome organizing and collective bargaining. They should be showing by example how a good business relationship works. After all, isn't this what

they want their students to learn in the first place? We support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.