

*In Support of HB 106 – Extending Collective Bargaining Rights to Non-Tenure Track Faculty*

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I am testifying as individual (not on behalf any legal entity), but as the current Secretary of the Executive Committee of Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) – the highest elected shared governance body in the system, I can attest that CUSF has consistently supported collective bargaining rights for USM faculty for over fifteen years. Our most recent vote in December was unanimous.

I strongly support extending these rights. Contrary to common perception, the primary benefit of collective bargaining for faculty is not about salaries—the legislature and governor retain authority over spending, particularly in an era of fiscal constraint. Rather, collective bargaining ensures that faculty voices on key academic issues are taken seriously. The University System of Maryland operates on the principle of Shared Governance, which should give faculty meaningful input on important decisions. In practice, however, when administrators make poorly justified decisions, faculty input can simply be ignored—and faculty who push back can face retribution. Collective bargaining would provide a necessary safeguard against such abuses.

As written, this bill covers only non-tenure track faculty. I recommend amending it to include all faculty who lack the protection of tenure and ideally removing restrictions on collective bargaining for all State of Maryland university faculty.

Many state universities nationwide already grant collective bargaining rights to faculty. Colleagues in states like New York report that it leads to more balanced, well-considered decision making. Faculty best understand the needs of our universities, both the educational mission and the research enterprise that serves as a critical economic engine for Maryland. Collective bargaining rights would also strengthen our ability to recruit top faculty to our public institutions. I urge you to support this bill with the amendment extending these rights to all State of Maryland university faculty.