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 Jesse Brooks, and I am a lecturer (non-tenured professor) at the University of Maryland, where I have worked for nine years teaching fiction, and how to write about the environment. 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. As a faculty member, I am one of only very few Maryland public employees without access to these.

For most if not all of my fellow non-tenured faculty members, we entered our graduate degrees with the belief that if we worked hard enough, we could succeed into financially stable tenured positions. It's safe to say that we have done this, we have worked as hard as we possibly could, and yet we remain overworked and underpaid. I have done so for ten years now. I have done my best to write and research and publish to qualify for a tenured position while teaching two to four times the number of courses tenured faculty teach. Tenured positions support academics in their research and writing by offering less courses, higher pay, and paid sabbaticals. When non-tenured faculty devote time to their own work, it fills us with anxiety and dread, because the more time we devote to our writing and research, less time is given to our excessive teaching load. Focusing on advancing our careers puts our very positions at risk when we are, in the present, prevented from teaching as well as our more privileged counter parts with such an unbalanced number of course. And so non-tenured faculty like me are trapped in a catch-22 devised by an apathetic administration looking to tamper costs. Time is so limited, for instance, that I have never even attempted to apply for promotion, since the administration makes the process intentionally complicated and work intensive for the applicant, rather than doing most of the clerical work themselves.

Our situation has become so hopelessly inescapable that, for myself and many colleagues (who I will not name in order to protect them) often do not read our teaching reviews. This is not because we have lost our passion necessarily; rather, we are simply all too aware of what our problem is: we do not have enough time. Teachers like me should not have to live every day with a personal defeat fashioned by someone else, while simultaneous being forced to take the blame as the recipients of the occasional negative student reviews, all while the administration operates with impunity. Reading my reviews is simply too painful when there is literally nothing I can do to help my students nor myself.

Yet, we nonetheless are able to assist two to three times the number of students than tenured faculty. Non-tenured professors write more recommendations to graduate programs, professional organizations, and various companies than tenured faculty. Meaning that we are directly responsible for the insertion of high level employee into essential positions. I have countless students who have graduated with a bachelors degree and then entered directly into the environmental sector, immediately making a positive difference in the world. But a high number of students has a downside, especially with increasing rates of depression and severe anxiety amongst young people, its important that we have the backing to adequately assist them. As someone living with bi-polar disorder I personally understand these struggles and

counsel students frequently from my experience. Having even walked a student directly to the mental health center because their state was so severe. But counseling to all of our students becomes logistically impossible during peak points of the semester when workloads are too much. Students fall by the wayside and this should not be the case.

Again, I am calling for a favorable report to this Bill. Members of the committee, collective bargaining is a fundamental human right that is granted to many other public higher ed institutions in the county, and indeed to many private, prestigious institutions in our own state. The reasons to exempt 4-year public institutions from this path does not make sense, and I ask that you please consider making this change. I can assure you that my situation is not dissimilar from many of my colleagues. I hear these stories from other co-workers every day. We did not choose these careers based on money, but to mentor and educate the public, and we cannot do our jobs adequately if much of our focus is on literally surviving. We end up failing our students and therefore ourselves for being unable to achieve our purpose in life, and we are currently powerless to end this vicious cycle.

Thank you for reading my statement.

Sincerely,

Jesse Brooks
English

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