Who Is AFT-Maryland?

Our Mission:
AFT-Maryland is a state federation network of public employee unions, representing many different professions such as nurses, education professionals, state and local government workers, DPW employees, corrections officers, etc., who work together collaboratively to empower and promote democratic principles in the workplace and beyond. We stand as an organization whose goal is to build a vibrant community through organizing, collective bargaining, engaging in political activism, and promoting the interests of all our members.

Strategy:
AFT-Maryland supports the building of vibrant, informed, and self-sustaining activist local affiliates. ORGANIZING, MEMBER ENGAGEMENT, ADVOCACY, and STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS are the primary tools employed to ensure relevance and drive excellence and growth.

AFT-Maryland promotes the development of highly skilled, effective labor leaders to achieve its goals.
AFT-Maryland
Affiliated Locals

Local 0340  Baltimore Teachers Union
Local 0800  City Union of Baltimore
Local 1670  Montgomery County Federation of Teachers
Local 1935  Maryland Classified Employees Association
Local 1980  Baltimore City Community College Faculty Federation
Local 2385  Garrett County Federation of Teachers
Local 4828  Maryland School for the Deaf Faculty & Staff Association
Local 4883  Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees
Local 5102  Baltimore County Federation of Public Health Nurses
Local 5197  AFT Healthcare-Maryland
Local 6197  Maryland Professional Employees Council
Local 8018  AFT-Maryland (At Large)
Support HB 2, Making Union Dues Tax Deductible

- Unionized workers are our communities' teachers, police officers, firefighters, first responders, utility workers, and construction crews. Maryland works because we work.

- Union dues not only cover the costs of negotiations and grievances, but to support free apprenticeships, continuing education, safety training, and funding for members' and their families' college scholarships.

- Union dues support the community through such things as the United Way campaign, little leagues, and local charities.

- For generations, until 2017 when the Trump administration passed the Tax Cut and Jobs Act, union dues were deductible from a union member's income taxes.

- The Maryland General Assembly passed this legislation in 2022. Governor Hogan unfairly vetoed it.

- Union members need to know their dues will not be taxed at the state level because Maryland supports its workers and their unions.

Please support HB 2
Support Full-Time Faculty Collective Bargaining Rights

The right to collective bargaining is a fundamental right afforded to thousands of state and higher ed employees throughout Maryland. It should be extended to those who have been unfairly excluded.

- In 2001, University of Maryland System staff won collective bargaining rights, but faculty and students were unfairly denied the same right. In 2021, full- and part-time faculty at Maryland’s community colleges obtained collective bargaining rights. Faculty and grads in 4-year public colleges were again excluded. Collective bargaining rights should be granted to all higher ed workers in Maryland.

Collective bargaining advances the educational mission of Maryland’s Universities and the State.

- Collective bargaining promotes salary equity and helps our universities attract and keep outstanding faculty members. UMD-College Park is second worst among peers in average cost-of-living adjusted salaries and has the second largest gender pay gap among peer institutions. Towson University and Bowie State are lower than all their peers, without exception. None of our Maryland campuses are in the top one-half.

- Collective bargaining helps improve the quality of instruction by addressing ballooning faculty-to-student classroom ratios. Between 2014 and 2022, the number of faculty at UMD-CP increased 3.1% while student enrollment jumped by 10.7%. Our state’s HBCUs have also seen large increases in student enrollments without a proportionate growth in faculty positions.

- Collective bargaining makes colleges and universities more efficient by preventing administrative bloat, making sure more state dollars go into the research and instruction that benefit Maryland residents. While full-time faculty ranks have recently dwindled, the compensation for administrators at UMD-CP has skyrocketed by 37.1% between 2016 and 2020 as the university has also grown its managerial ranks by 42.4%. Collective bargaining would allow us to counter this trend, defend the educational role of our institution, and make our universities more efficient and effective.

- Collective bargaining safeguards the quality of instruction and research by defending academic freedom. With a collectively bargained contract, partisan political attacks against what can and cannot be taught in a classroom or what is a field of study worthy of research would be neutralized. USM is slowly dismantling protections for academic freedom by decreasing the share of tenured faculty (down 6.9% at UMD-CP since 2014) and increasing the percentage of faculty in contingent,

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at-will forms of employment (up 19.3% at UMD-CP since 2014). Without the job security afforded by tenure, academic freedom is imperiled and universities undermine their core task, becoming unable to fulfill their public mission and their obligation to the state.

**Collective bargaining buttresses real shared governance.**
- The existing model of shared governance—currently a senate of faculty members whose role is merely advisory—is not working. Faculty have no mechanism to substantively engage in financial and budgetary decision-making, nor are they able to meaningfully engage in determining our working and safety conditions.

**Collective bargaining does not benefit only faculty—it benefits the university as a whole**
- Among our national peer institutions, those with some degree of collective bargaining for faculty and graduate assistants on their campuses on average significantly outrank those without collective bargaining.
Briefing Paper: Collective Bargaining for Contingent Faculty at Public, 4-Year Colleges

Support Contingent Faculty Collective Bargaining Rights

Who are the Contingent Faculty Members?

- Contingent faculty are part- and full-time instructors and researchers who lack permanent contracts, and the job stability and academic freedom provided to their tenured colleagues who do similar work. They teach crucial skills such as writing, foreign languages, statistics, and basic computing. In the USM, contingent faculty are over half of all instructors and a majority of all faculty. On some campuses, they are almost 70% of the teaching faculty.

- The number of contingent faculty teaching at our 4-year institutions has increased steadily. Since 2014, the number of contingent faculty at the state’s flagship institution has grown 19.3 percent. The number of full-time faculty positions has declined by 6.9 percent during that same timeframe.

What are the working conditions for Contingent Faculty?

- Pay and other working conditions for contingent faculty are highly variable across institutions, schools, colleges, and even departments. Contingent faculty are paid on a per course basis, and with a full teaching load, make $16 to $32K per year. Many full-time instructors, as well as all part-time instructors, lack access to health care and other benefits, and there is no standard definition of what constitutes a full-time, benefits-eligible position. Most contingent faculty are denied COLA and merit pay.

- Contingent faculty face job insecurity that depletes their morale and undermines their ability to plan for the future or earn a living wage in the present. This situation is especially true during economic downturns, when they fear job loss. Non-tenure-track research faculty do cutting edge work and bring millions of research dollars to our universities, but know that if they lose funding, they are out of a job.
  - Instructors who get teaching assignments just weeks or days before the start of classes, have less time to plan or receive training directed at ensuring campus health and safety. Faculty members are often the first to identify when a student needs academic health or faces a mental health challenge.

- Contingent faculty are rarely given the same support as tenure-track faculty. They are denied access to faculty due-process rights and academic freedom, thereby stifling their ability to teach challenging material. They have no protection from retaliation. Many contingent faculty members lack individual, private offices to discuss sensitive topics with students and are often not provided up-to-date computers and other equipment.

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What avenues do contingent faculty have to resolve their concerns?

- In 2010, the Maryland State Legislature approved a “Meet and Confer” process for USM Adjunct Faculty (less the 50% FTE) and Graduate Assistants, but this has been implemented only sporadically or not at all.
- Contingent faculty at the state Community Colleges, many of whom have the same qualifications as USM faculty and indeed teach the same courses, were recently granted the right to collective bargaining. It should be a right granted to all workers in higher ed in Maryland as well.
Support Graduate Assistant Collective Bargaining Rights

Who are graduate assistants?
- A graduate assistant is an enrolled student employed by the university to teach, research, or perform administrative duties essential to the running of the university.
  - Mean time-to-degree can be between five and thirteen years, depending on the field. Graduate Assistants often have families and children dependents, which makes their minimal pay and stipends that much more of a problem.

What kinds of work do graduate students perform?
- Teaching assistants may teach classes, lead discussion and review sessions, hold office hours, administer learning management systems, and/or grade assignments and exams.
- Research assistants are integral members of research teams who discuss research questions and methodologies, run experiments and do other forms of research, draft papers, and perform administrative work that keeps research enterprises running.
- Administrative assistants answer phones and email, collect and prepare data, manage information systems, and help with course scheduling and advising.

Do assistantships count towards a grad student’s degree?
- Oftentimes, much of the work done by graduate employees is unrelated to degree requirements and students’ specific fields of study.
  - Assistantship supervisors are not necessarily the faculty research advisors who determine degree progress; often, grads are asked to work beyond the stipulated 20 hrs/week. Assistantships can sometimes slow students’ progress toward their degrees.

Are assistantship stipends adequate?
- Graduate assistant stipends are far below living wage standards, forcing grads into poor housing conditions and food insecurity.
  - For example, at UMCP, the minimum grad employee salary is $14K less than the MIT living wage standard for the region for a single person household. At UMBC, the minimum grad employee salary is $20k for Masters students – less than half the fulltime living wage of $41,054 per year

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before taxes for a single person household in Maryland. For graduate assistants with dependents, the situation is even more dire.

- UMCP consistently ranks last in graduate employee minimum stipends among other Big 10 institutions (many of which are unionized).

**What avenues do graduate employees have to share their concerns?**

- The meet-and-confer process established in 2010, which requires semesterly meetings between GA’s and University administrators, is not working – *University administrators do not engage with graduate employees in good faith* and systematically minimize graduate employee concerns. At UMBC, there were no official meet-and-confer meetings for several years before 2022-23.
Briefing Paper: Fair Treatment for State Employees at the Maryland School for the Deaf

Fixing the Problem of Employee Misclassification at the Maryland School for the Deaf

The Maryland School for the Deaf is in crisis. The former governor has starved this state agency, which serves Maryland students from every county in the state who are hard of hearing, and the staffing model they’ve been forced to resort to is broken.

- Out of 350 faculty and staff at MSD, more than 150 are "contractual" staff. Contractual staff have the exact same job duties as PIN employees, serving as dorm counselors, teacher aides, speech pathologists, and teachers. No other K through 12 public school system in the state has this high a percentage of its workforce as temporary or "contractual."

- Most contractual workers at MSD have been working at the school for more than a year, some for far longer than that.

- Contractual employees at the school are denied the state employee pension and retirement benefits, as well as any paid vacation leave.

- Contractual employees are excluded from the union and the protections afforded school employees via a collectively bargained contract.

- Unlike most employees of local school systems, contractual employees at MSD have no due process rights, but are all instead at will employees.

- The lack of basic, fundamental rights for these workers serving special needs student in our state has meant many high quality educators and employees find jobs elsewhere where they are treated with the respect they deserve.

- The state legislature passed several laws in recent years designed to ensure that all MSD employees had union rights, but the unelected officials at DBM have decreed that the law doesn’t apply to these workers. Why? Because they are contractual.

It’s not a coincidence that the contractual workforce is made up of more women and people of color than the rest of the school. The school desperately needs to hire more BIPOC staff to better serve the student population, but the starvation and divestment of MSD by the previous governor has caused morale and retention issues that cause the school to struggle even more.

The state legislature should pass a budget that assures positions at MSD follow the law and are considered permanent, not contractual, employees.

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Briefing Paper: State Employee Vacancies and the Maryland Budget

Support Workers and Agencies in the State Budget

Maryland works because of its state employees. Whether keeping our waterways and roads safe, assuring our drinking water is clean, educating our students with special needs, or working in state hospitals to help our citizens - state employees provide the vital services needed by Maryland residents.

Unfortunately, after eight years of an administration determined to starve our state agencies of resources needed to fulfill our obligations to Maryland residents, nearly every state agency is facing historic employee vacancy rates. Make no mistake: whether it is at the Maryland State Department of Labor, where Marylanders waited months to get the unemployment checks due them, or at the Maryland Department of the Environment, where staffing levels are so low that the Federal EPA has questioned our state’s ability to regulate our own water systems, these budget decisions to under-fund and under-staff key Maryland agencies has failed our residents.

With a new administration that recognizes this problem, coupled with a state legislature that has more budgetary authority than it ever has, we can begin to reverse these troubling trends.

The Maryland General Assembly must pass a budget that:

- fully funds and dramatically increases state employee compensation. State employees need to be treated as the professionals they are;
- does NOT cut staff! Too many agencies inexcusably have too many vacant positions and cannot provide high-level services; and
- reverses the trend of chipping away at state employee benefits, so as to show current employees and prospective job candidates that the work of a state employee is valued and appreciated by this state.
Briefing Paper: Hometown Heroes Retirement Income Tax Reduction

Support SB 83 and HB 15
Hometown Heroes Retiree Tax Credit

- This bill will help to ensure a secure and dignified retirement for our Hometown Heroes and first responders.

- It will help to recruit and retain good public servants. Competitive salaries and benefits are needed to hire and keep qualified people on the job.

- The money the retirees save on taxes would be pumped back into the local economy. According to the National Institute of Retirement Security - for every $1 a retiree spends it creates $1.98 in economic activity

- Finally, keeping retirees in the state after retirement is important. Their knowledge and contributions to communities are needed.

Support SB 83 and HB 15
Support HB 85, Allowing Teachers Unions and School Board to Negotiate Class Size

The pandemic has coupled with deteriorating working conditions for educators in Baltimore and across the state to cause a mass exodus of those in the teaching profession. Just this past year, local and national headlines drew our attention to the historic levels of teaching vacancies in our public schools. One major reason cited by teachers as to why they are leaving the profession is the increase in class sizes. Teachers unions should have the right to at least bring up bargaining proposals to manage these ballooning class size numbers.

- Educators need to have the tools and a voice - to enact measures that they know through experience will help students to succeed. One such tool is the ability to negotiate class size.

- Maryland is one of only 9 states that bars discussions of class size as a subject of collective bargaining.

- Because class size cannot currently be a subject for bargaining – teachers do not have a voice on this important policy that directly affects students.

- Changing the law will give educators and administrators the ability to discuss and come to agreements on what is best for students and teachers.

AFT-Maryland is a strong advocate for reducing class size to help raise student achievement, especially in high-poverty and at-risk schools.

Please support HB 85