

Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 658
Supporting

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

71.428571428% is the percentage of my stipend that I have to spend on housing if I want to live close to UMD and in a room not shared with a roommate, which does not seem like a demanding need.

If the rationale behind fully funded PhD programs is providing people -- who are at least intellectually qualified -- an amount of money that's just enough to free them from worrying basic living needs, meanwhile, respecting their basic intellectual dignity, it appears that UMD is failing in this perspective. In my experience, it's almost impossible to rely on my stipend to get through if I have regular meals like any functional human being will.

And many graduate students are actually not seeking wealth -- at least not at this stage -- but striving to contribute to researches that are challenging and, in many cases, significantly important to our society. But as far as I know most of graduate assistants are being overworked and underpaid, which is probably the worst combination that could happen to any worker.

I believe we do deserve better working environment where reasonable opinions can get reasonable amount of attention and discussion. Therefore, I urge you to support the SB 658 bill before you today as well as the citizens and workers who are here before you asking to be recognized.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Shuangqi Luo
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