

## Against HB 1446

House Bill 1446 seeks to destroy higher education in North Dakota, and with it, freedom of speech, freedom of enquiry, and the ability to innovate, create, adjust to changing circumstance. Indirectly then, it also helps destroy the state by making it static. Without freedom of thought provided by tenure, and without the ability to keep a job at a university, the following are likely to happen and why:

- Higher Education has long been touted an engine of economic growth for the state. This is because it generates a tremendous amount of income itself, but also because it is an idea factory. Those ideas come from an educational environment that introduces students to the latest ideas, across the disciplines, and affords them both the skills and the space to work with those ideas for themselves. Take away the free play of ideas, you limit student ability to work conceptually with ideas, think creatively, go boldly. You hurt innovation across disciplines.
- Like all business models, NDUS must showcase itself as a good place to work. That is a challenge, given our traditionally low salaries. But tenure has allowed us to continue recruiting top flight faculty, because that is often more important to them than a high salary, a big city, lots of flash. Faculty spend many years of their lives dedicated to study in their disciplines, and so what they most want to do is settle down, use their study, work in their disciplines. Money, lots of things to do—these are almost always secondary considerations for faculty. And what is primary? The ability to work in a field, think in a field, have colleagues in a field, and communicate ideas in a field, and work with students also interested in their disciplines. Anything that delimits a faculty member's ability to work in their field turns them way away, quickly away. If not, they are not the right kind of faculty member to begin with, because they do not consider their fields important. HB 1446 delimits a faculty's ability to freely work in their disciplines.
- Like any business model, NDUS needs to be able to show young professionals seeking work within the institution that they can have a future within the institution. They need to know they can grow old in the job, develop prestige with a sense of place, become respected, contribute, know and be known in a world of work. HB 1446 will lop off the imagined stable future our young faculty hope to have, because it will definitely show them that there is no future, that at a certain point in their careers, right when they are settling, they can be arbitrarily fired through no fault of their own—perhaps only to balance the budget. Who would devote 10 years of graduate study to then settle in to an unsettling place? No one worthy hiring.

I urge you to stand up for North Dakota, Democracy, Freedom, and Innovation, and for respect, by voting against HB 1446. Sincerely, Robert Kibler