

Hello. I am Paul Johanson, tenured Dickinson State University faculty member and current Faculty Senate President. Although many faculty members at DSU agree with what I am about to say, I speak only for myself and do not have permission to speak on behalf of DSU.

As is pointed out in other written testimony, the North Dakota State Constitution states the authority over institutions in the university system belongs to the State Board of Higher Education. There is good reason for this, one of which is that the accreditation organization covering this part of the country, the Higher Learning Commission, looks for this hierarchy. In addition, the Higher Learning Commission looks for shared governance (see Criteria 5a in HLC's Criteria for Accreditation), which is something Representative Lefor has stated he is against, and this bill erodes, as it specifically stated that the decision of the university president is not reviewable by any faculty board. Thus, it appears that if this bill becomes law, it threatens our accreditation, which in turn makes it difficult for our students to get grants and loans.

Another concern I have with this bill is its effect on the recruitment and retention of well-qualified faculty. Many of our current faculty have told me that without the ability to gain tenure, they would not have applied to work at DSU. If this bill becomes law, with all of the ways a university president can use to not renew a faculty member's a contract, it threatens what tenure means.

To read this and listen to Representative Lefor, as well as read articles about this bill that DSU President Easton has written, it sounds like we have dozens of tenured faculty sitting around not doing their jobs. This is certainly not the case. The vast majority of the faculty are working hard to help their students learn, serving on committees, and meeting with potential students. Our faculty are already evaluated annually by students and our department chairs, and our deans review these. There are other procedures to remove a tenured faculty member from their position if their behavior warrants it.

In addition, if this bill becomes law, every time you esteemed legislators provide money for raises, you would threaten my job, especially if the institution does not raise tuition, because I would have to make sure I have more students in my classes to cover my salary and benefits. That goes for every time health insurance goes up in cost too. I have heard Representative Lefor say we need to provide raises to attract and retain state employees, as regional average pay in many positions has gone up. Yet those raises threaten my job.

Grade inflation could also go rampant as professors try to fill their courses by giving easy A's. But does that encourage good teaching and learning?

This bill has no provisions for high need areas, such as K-12 educators in mathematics, science and English. Some of the best qualified and experienced professors teach courses designed for majors in those areas. These classes tend to be small in size, which could result in that professor having difficulty showing that their salary and expenses are covered by tuition. Thus, we would either lose those faculty members and that major could be eliminated because that professor would be hard to replace, or the professor would ask their department chair to not assign them

those classes, and again the major may be cut. Then, the local school districts will find it even harder to attract teachers in these areas.

One of the requirements listed for a faculty member to maintain tenure is to have at least the average number of advisees. I will point out this seems to indicate a serious misunderstanding of the word "average". Garrison Keillor used to joke that at Lake Wobegon, "all of the children are above average". It just is not going to happen. This indicates that Representative Lefor wants to get rid of approximately half the tenured faculty every year if this bill is enacted. Furthermore, just a few years ago, our administration removed advising from the faculty in several departments to give it to professional advisors, and now they are going to judge faculty on advising!

Thank you for listening.