

Testimony in Opposition to Engrossed House Bill 1446

Andrew P. Armacost, President, University of North Dakota.

Senator Elkin and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Andy Armacost and I serve as the President of the University of North Dakota.

I appreciate the continuing work of the House Majority Leader to accept the thoughts of others and to modify the language in this bill. Yet, even with those changes, I urge a “Do Not Pass” vote for Engrossed House Bill 1446 for four reasons.

First, the bill is unnecessary. Presidents have sufficient powers already in place to remove faculty members for cause, including those with tenure.

Second, the bill undermines the bedrock principle of academic freedom. The granting of tenure enables academic freedom by protecting a faculty member’s research, their writing, and their speech. A well-designed tenure system rooted in the best principles of higher education governance is foundational to our system of higher education. Tenure is awarded with the advice of the faculty and should be taken away with the advice of the faculty.

Third, the bill fails to recognize the important role tenured faculty members offer in their research, their service, and their leadership. Teaching and advising loads are impacted by these other essential duties. The bill’s use of “teaching and advising load” to gauge workload is an insufficient measure, and it fails to recognize important differences across academic fields and in teaching undergraduate versus graduate students.

Finally, the bill will negatively impact our ability to attract faculty and staff members to North Dakota to serve our students. The reputational harm that will come to the NDUS system should this bill become law will make it more difficult for the eleven institutions in the system to meet their missions and deliver world-class educational experiences for their students.

For these reasons, I encourage you to vote against this bill. Thank you.