

HB1179
Bill Testimony
Rep. Eric J. Murphy
District 43, Grand Forks

Chairman Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee. This amended bill seeks to study paid time off (PTO) for 12-month contracted faculty in the North Dakota University System. Best practices for PTO for 12-month contracted faculty will be examined for both in-state and out-of-state institutions of higher education.

The original intent of this bill was to require all institutions under the control of the State Board of Higher Education to give 24 days of paid time off (PTO) to faculty on a 12-month contract or appointment and to establish a system to track the use of this PTO. Faculty on a 12-month contract can carry over 30 days or 240 hours of PTO into the next calendar year. Note that faculty on 9- and 10-month contracts are not eligible.

Discrepancies in North Dakota University System

The origin of this bill was the tremendous difference found in the North Dakota University System. Currently at North Dakota State University (NDSU), according to NDSU Policy 130 Annual Leave in section 5, *"Annual leave for 12 month faculty and other non-banded job categories not identified in #3 above is earned at a rate of 16 hours per month, 24 days per year. Annual leave will be prorated for those who are less than fulltime. For non-banded employees on 9, 10, and 11 month appointments, see section 320."*

At UND, 12-month faculty have no PTO and breaks during semesters and between semesters are considered workdays for faculty on a 12-month contract. Why is this important? Because what exists is a chaotic system in which 12-month faculty time off is not tracked nor accounted for by administration. Hence, this bill requires an institution with faculty on a 12-month contract to have their PTO recorded and tracked, adding financial accountability of this time.

What are the costs?

Until separation from the institution, there is no additional costs for this PTO other than the system to account for PTO use, which is already existing for staff and administrators. Upon separation, the individual would be paid for the PTO in their account, which is up to 54 days of PTO, in a manner that is the same policy used for administrators and staff.

Summary

Having two major research institutions with a vast difference in benefits for 12-month contract faculty is not ideal. Further, not accounting for time off is not a financially responsible position and allows for abuse of this system. This original bill, prior to being amended, was a straightforward bill that normalizes PTO for 12-month contracted faculty between all institutions in the NDUS. The amended bill is intended to study PTO at institutions in North Dakota and to compare best practices in North Dakota and in other states.