



Senate Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education  
Ohio Federation of Teachers Testimony on HB 49  
By Darold Johnson, Legislative Director  
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Chair Gardner, Vice Chair Williams and members of the Committee. My name is Darold Johnson, Legislative Director for the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). OFT represents higher education faculty and staff, K-12 staff and public employees.

OFT is concerned about four key issues in House Bill 49:

1. Lack of increased funding for state share of instruction.
2. Language added to the budget regarding post tenure review.
3. Economic reporting of faculty members.
4. Most importantly, the language affecting higher education staff sick leave.

A year ago, the Ohio Department of Higher Education announced a goal to increase the percentage of Ohioans holding a postsecondary credential to 65 percent by 2025 in order to meet the increasing demand for jobs that require some sort of certificate or degree. According to the Legislative Service Commission, 43 percent of Ohioans have a post-secondary credential. While there are several different programs developed to reach this goal, the most effective are its investment in the state share of instruction and Ohio College Opportunity Grants.

It will be hard to meet that goal if the state refuses to increase higher education funding. If resources are low, limiting individuals sick leave is not something that will save money. To the contrary, it will fail to generate funds while decreasing morale.

### **Post Tenure Review**

Post-tenure review can mean different things to different people so it is important to define the term. The American Association of University Professors and American Federation of Teachers have the same view on this topic. Lurking within the phrase are often two misconceptions: that tenured faculty are not already recurrently subject to a variety of forms of evaluation of their work, and that the presumption of merit that attaches to tenure should be periodically cast aside so that the faculty member must bear the burden of justifying retention. Neither assumption is true.

### **Sick leave language**

OFT locals have language in their contracts that allow for the removal of professors with tenure as we do for K-12 teachers who have continuing contracts. We feel that this language is not needed and better enforcement of current procedures will work in the overwhelming majority of cases it is needed.

The House language restricting sick leave is similar to that included in SB 5. You may recall that SB 5, sought to restrict workers rights to bargain their workplace conditions, was defeated overwhelmingly. This proposal will not save institutions money but it could have a negative impact on workplace sick banks. It could eliminate sick leave banks because people would have fewer days to donate.

### **Financial disclosures**

We also feel that requiring faculty members to complete financial disclosures similar to elected officials creates an administrative burden that isn't necessary. The \$25 dollar threshold isn't practical for professors; it was intended for elected officials who are constantly receiving contributions and who can influence policy. Academia is a publishing oriented environment and professors could receive income from a variety of sources, none of which would be a conflict of interest. We feel that this language should be removed.

This concludes my testimony and I welcome any questions you have.