

**Testimony of Alex Povitsky, Ph.D., full tenured professor, the University of Akron Faculty Senate member in 2022-2025, Associate Fellow of AIAA-the largest society of aerospace professionals**

**Email: [povitsky@uakron.edu](mailto:povitsky@uakron.edu), cell phone 330-6978378, office ASEC108C**

For the Ohio State House of Representatives and

Workforce and Higher Education Committee

May the 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

My name is Alex Povitsky. I am a professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Akron, where I have taught full-time for 20 years. I do not represent the University of Akron, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to HB 151.

I disagree with the bill for the following reasons:

1. By the bill draft , a state institution of higher education shall conduct a post-tenure review if a tenured faculty member receives a "does not meet performance expectations"

The above procedure will destroy the established tenured system that allows professors to act as independent co-managers of universities. This bill will open doors for retaliation, prevent freedom of speech of professors and abandon the concept of shared governance of universities by professors and university administration that will negatively affect the chief goal of state university-preparation of highly trained personnel.

2. By the bill draft, student evaluations conducted under the bill account for at least 50% of the teaching area component of the evaluation.

The evaluations of professors by the students were originally introduced by students' organizations and were aimed at receiving feedback from students by professors, however, the professors and administration are fully aware about limitations of students' opinions. In no way these evaluations were introduced as a tool for administrative decisions. The students' evaluations tend to praise the professors who go light on students in terms of the tests and assignments and unnecessary inflation of grades. Professors, who demand professional knowledge and ability to solve open-ended and challenging problems, are typically severely underscored in these evaluations. If these professors are either fired or forced to be "nice" to students, it would critically reduce the level of professional preparation of students as independent critical thinkers.

3. Regarding "prohibitions on faculty unions striking during contract negotiations" and that the Board of Trustees can override the existing CBA contract:

Presently the unions are the only bodies that demand salary increase and improvement of working conditions of faculty members. The administration of university tends to increase their own salaries and increase their ranks by creating more non-teaching well-paid administrative positions. Also, the universities' administration creates semi-professional and expensive sports' teams using universities' budget. In the current spiral of inflation, the salaries of faculty members effectively become smaller. The strike is a last-resort tool that allows faculty members to get a decent contract; otherwise, the administration would not listen to faculty members. If you allow the Board of Trustees to neglect the existing CBA contract, you make faculty members powerless beggars.

This new law (if accepted) will drive the best faculty members out of the State of Ohio and prevent new faculty hires of high quality that will be very detrimental for students.