

Testimony of Astrid N. Sambolín Morales, Ph.D.
Before the House Higher Education Committee
Representative Tom Young, Chair

May 15, 2023

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the House Higher Education Committee: My name is Astrid N. Sambolín Morales, and I am a professor of Cultural Foundations of Education at Kent State University. I **do not** represent Kent State University, but instead am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to House Bill 151.

House Bill 151 would rob faculty unions of the right to collectively bargain for terms that will affect our employment, increase the workload of faculty juggling overwhelming research, teaching, and service responsibilities, and infringe on faculty's privacy by making their syllabi publicly accessible. The bill seems to amplify or create problems in higher education rather than solve them, and it does not reflect the desires of your constituency.

HB 151 is threatening the collective bargaining rights of faculty, removing the ability to effectively negotiate the terms of employment on essential issues like annual reviews, which are incredibly important in the tenure and promotion process. Moreover, it makes the Retrenchment Article of the TT CBA irrelevant. It seems that the last time such measures were introduced in a bill and put for a citizen's veto referendum, the referendum was rightfully repealed. This should indicate that most of your constituents do not find these measures helpful or desirable. And yet, here we are again.

However, one of the most disturbing aspects of the bill is the increase in faculty workloads. Tenure-track faculty already have onerous requirements to fulfill to obtain tenure. We must publish peer-reviewed articles multiple times a year, write grant proposals to obtain external funding, teach courses, advise students, and serve on various committees to fulfill service obligations. Increasing the faculty's workload seems ludicrous given all we do already, and there is no justification for this item in the bill.

Finally, the most egregious component of this bill would force faculty to upload syllabi that professors create to share information with enrolled students. This step would force faculty to share their class, including assignments, reading lists, grading policies, and class expectations, with random strangers who might not even be affiliated with the university. Syllabi also represent faculty expertise. Having strangers and laypeople "evaluate" the syllabi seems counterintuitive and downright harmful. Moreover, it allows anyone (even those not taking the class) to retaliate against and potentially harass faculty members.

I have yet to meet one faculty member or administrator with anything favorable to find in this bill. Again, based on the overwhelming testimony in opposition to the bill, it's clear that many of those who will be directly affected by it do not find it helpful or desirable. Anecdotal evidence about student complaints is insufficient to pass a bill infringing on faculty's rights. Such drastic measures will only drive away talented faculty and make students second guess whether they want to attend an Ohio higher education institution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Astrid N. Sambolín Morales