

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 5/16/23

Name: Eve McPherson

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC

Address: 2824 SCARBOROUGH RD

City: CLEVELAND State: OH Zip: 44118

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Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 151

Specific Issue: HIGHER EDUCATION

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? NONE - WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

I oppose HB 151 in its entirety

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Testimony of Eve McPherson, Ph.D.
Before the House Higher Education Committee
Rep. Tom Young, Chair
May 16, 2023

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Eve McPherson and I am a professor of music at Kent State University at Trumbull where I have taught for 11 years. I do not represent Kent State University at Trumbull, but rather am submitting testimony as a private citizen in opposition to Substitute House Bill 151.

I have many objections to this legislation. I will focus on a few objections in this testimony.

First, requiring faculty to undergo formal evaluations every year will be a costly mandate. The costs will inevitably be passed down to students. I currently undergo reviews every three years. These reviews are thorough and require that my file is seen by three separate committees. The documentation I create for each of these reviews is hundreds of pages long. This documentation and the thorough review are necessary to ensure that faculty are doing good work. If this were to become an annual exercise, a great deal of administrative staff would need to be hired, often with specializations in specific academic areas. This will be expensive. Students will end up paying for it via increased fees.

On the topic of reviews, also mandating that fifty percent of the review be weighed on student evaluations, is highly problematic. First, most evaluations are submitted electronically now. Professors have a difficult time getting full participation. Since we no longer use paper forms and it would be unethical to know who is submitting the reviews, often only one third or one quarter of the students in a class submit an evaluation. This is an incomplete picture to say the least. Second, professors who teach required and difficult classes – particularly the math classes that are required for graduation – are likely to receive low evaluations. The students start these courses unhappy to have been placed in them. Finally, since student evaluations are anonymous, professors would be unable to contest reviews from students who might be unhappy with their grade for instance. Research has concluded that student evaluations are inadequate and problematic measures for evaluating instructional quality, and while they are considered in faculty reviews, for the reasons above, they are not weighed at fifty percent of an overall review.

Second, eliminating our collective bargaining abilities will, among other things, mean that Ohio will not attract top scholars and researchers. The best will go elsewhere and for good reason. The inability to collectively bargain for working conditions would make working in academia untenable for many of us. For instance, as a regional campus professor, it could easily mean that the university might assign me to travel between several campuses each day – this would easily add 3-hours a day in additional driving to my work requirements. This means less family time and less time working for and with students. But it is something that administration sometimes

considers implementing. It is in fact something that I have had to do on occasion. In the semesters that I have had to do this, my workday has started at 7 a.m. and ended at 9 p.m. With the help the union, this type of assignment has been limited to when only necessary as opposed to being used, in some cases, as a form of retaliation against some employees. Do not remove our ability to address these types of workplace issues.

Sincerely,

Eve McPherson



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