

# **Written testimony regarding House Bill 2348**

## **Submitted by University of Kansas Chancellor Douglas A. Girod and Kansas State University President Richard Linton**

### **OVERVIEW**

Kansas universities thrive on exceptional faculty who advance research and educate future leaders. These accomplished scholars and researchers not only bring world-class expertise to our state but also build its intellectual foundation and drive economic growth.

Tenure remains fundamental to attracting and retaining premier faculty. *Every leading research university in the nation* maintains a tenure system because it ensures academic excellence and innovation. Faculty earn tenure only after demonstrating sustained excellence through a rigorous, multi-year assessment process guided by comprehensive university policies. Even after achieving tenure, faculty undergo regular reviews to evaluate their contributions, ensure continued productivity and identify opportunities for growth.

Eliminating or weakening tenure in Kansas would create an immediate and severe competitive disadvantage for our universities, impacting research that makes an impact on every Kansan. Top researchers and educators would choose institutions in other states where tenure protections remain strong, while our current faculty would receive compelling offers to leave. This loss of talent would significantly diminish Kansas's research capabilities, educational quality and economic vitality. The long-term impact would extend far beyond our campuses, affecting Kansas's ability to compete in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

### **ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TENURE TO THE STATE OF KANSAS**

#### **University of Kansas**

In fulfilling its mission of education, service and research, the University of Kansas serves as an economic development engine for the state of Kansas. KU's annual economic impact is \$8 billion, which is more than the gross revenue of all but one Kansas company (Koch.) In fact, if KU's economic impact were its own economic sector, it would be the ninth largest in Kansas.

This tremendous economic impact is driven largely by KU's research operation – which is premised on tenured faculty. If the State of Kansas were to do away with tenure, there is no question it would devastate KU's research infrastructure and have immediate and irreparable negative economic impacts on the state.

Here are some of the ways in which tenured faculty provide economic benefit to Kansas.

#### KU tenured researchers bring research dollars into Kansas

- \$546M in research annually; 4,000 university jobs funded
- \$50M spent with KS vendors in 65 counties annually
- Every federal dollar that a KU researcher is awarded generates an additional \$2 in economic activity in Kansas.

#### KU tenured researchers create startup companies

- 50+ active startup companies
- 100+ university inventions licensed for use by companies

#### KU tenured researchers create jobs

- New startups and corporate relocations bring new jobs
- KU Innovation Park (74 companies, 750 jobs, \$50M in payroll)

#### KU tenured researchers bring private dollars into Kansas

- 40% of donors are from outside Kansas

#### KU tenured researchers respond to major/sudden opportunities for the state

- KU Cancer Center NCI initiative (\$2.5B impact since 2007)
- Panasonic (\$4B capital investment, 4,000 jobs)
- Hydrogen Hub efforts
- Tech Hub efforts

#### KU tenured researchers address Kansas' workforce needs

- 7,200 degrees/certificates annually
- 70% of Kansas students stay in the region after graduation
- 35% out-of-state students stay in the region after graduation
- 3,000+ company partnerships on curriculum, research, internships

### **Kansas State University**

As a land-grant university, Kansas State University powers economic growth across Kansas through research, teaching and service. Our work generates \$2.3 billion in yearly economic benefits, with research breakthroughs in critical fields like agriculture and biosecurity leading the way. The success of this research relies on tenured professors who've dedicated their careers to solving Kansas's challenges.

Getting rid of tenure would hit hardest in the areas where K-State leads the nation – our cutting-edge work in animal health and food safety, our advances in agricultural technology, our vital work in protecting the nation's food supply through biosecurity research and our innovations in engineering. Without the stability tenure provides, we'd struggle to keep doing this essential work that gives Kansas its competitive advantage.

These aren't just academic programs – they're economic engines for Kansas, creating jobs and driving progress. Our tenured faculty lead these efforts, and their work would be at risk if we lost the ability to offer the same professional stability that other top universities provide.

Eliminating tenure would accelerate the loss of talent from Kansas at a time when we desperately need to attract and keep skilled professionals. We already face challenges convincing young people and innovative companies to build their futures here. Weakening our universities by dismantling tenure would only make Kansas less appealing to the industries and workforce we need to grow our economy.

Tenured faculty at K-State contribute \$218 million in annual research expenditures. They hold 172 active intellectual property licenses and have helped create 14 active start-up companies based on K-State technologies. K-State's tenured faculty also attract over 300 industry-sponsored research grants each year.

Their efforts have resulted in the creation of 228 family-sustaining jobs, the retention of 364 direct jobs, and \$888 million in new direct capital investment. Furthermore, K-State faculty have played a key role in expanding 285 existing businesses, attracting 1 new business, and supporting the formation of 44 new businesses.