

**Testimony of Whitney Whitaker, Ph.D., Associate Professor & Chair of Psychology
Regarding HB 2348**

Chairperson Humphries, Vice Chairperson Williams, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Whitney Whitaker, and I am an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology at Fort Hays State University. **I am writing to express my *strong opposition* to HB 2348.**

As a tenured faculty member and department chair who supervises colleagues who are on the tenure track, I am deeply concerned about the implications of this bill for a variety of reasons. In general, the passage of HB 2348 would have severe consequences for our state's higher education system. It would negatively impact national university rankings and accreditations with the Higher Learning Commission, leading to a loss of faculty members and diminishing the quality of education and community engagement.

The Department of Psychology at FHSU offers two graduate programs in Clinical and School Psychology. There is already a shortage of school and clinical psychologists in the state of Kansas, and this bill would negatively impact our ability to retain and recruit faculty for programs like these, which may result in a reduction of Kansas graduate programs who are training future professionals to provide essential services to families and children across Kansas.

Tenure provides faculty with the employment, financial, and professional security necessary to serve the people of Kansas effectively and to educate and employ the next generation. This is not a life-long appointment without checks and balances, it is a well-earned status at the university that is mutually beneficial to the employed faculty, university, students, and communities at large. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the faculty at FHSU, the administration, the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), and the Kansas Department of Administration clearly states that “the granting of tenure by the Board of Regents is not a right. Tenure will be granted when the faculty member has been shown to have the proper qualifications and when it is in the long-term interest of the university.” (MOA, Article IX.1, pp. 11-12). Faculty members continue to be reviewed by supervisors and peers once tenured to ensure qualifications and alignment with university interests.

HB 2348 appears to undermine the long-standing contract between FHSU faculty, administration, KBOR, and the Kansas Department of Administration. As stated in the terms of the MOA, conditions of employment, including tenure, are determined by meeting and conferring with the faculty bargaining unit. HB 2348 violates this requirement.

I urge you to oppose HB 2348. It jeopardizes the quality of education and the future of higher education in Kansas. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Whitney Whitaker', written in a cursive style.

Whitney Whitaker, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
Fort Hays State University