

Good afternoon, honorable committee members. Thank you for hearing this testimony today. My name is Lindsey Ibanez, and I am an associate professor of sociology at Washburn University and the secretary of the Washburn chapter of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors). I am writing to you because I oppose house Bill 2348, which would eliminate tenure at Kansas public universities.

Public universities are a significant economic engine for our state, providing employment, tax revenue, and research innovation in fields from agriculture to medicine. For example, K-State alone generated \$2.3 billion in economic impact for the state of Kansas in 2022, including \$92.3 million in state and local taxes¹. And universities' economic impact reaches far beyond their home communities: In 2023, the University of Kansas spent \$78.9 million in 97 Kansas counties on research-related goods and services². KU contributed \$1.2 billion to the US economy in 2021³, and Wichita State University and WSU Tech contributed a combined \$1.3 billion to the Kansas economy during the same year. Public universities provide a powerful return on investment for our state.

Tenure serves two important purposes: it helps universities attract and retain the best and brightest minds in their fields, and it allows instructors and researchers the freedom to investigate and explore ideas, even controversial ones, in the interest of discovering truth. Without tenure, professors would likely seek employment in other sectors or in states whose universities *do* offer tenure, thus robbing Kansas of the talent that it needs to generate billions in economic impact annually.

Finally, I believe that eliminating tenure would solve a problem that does not exist – the perceived inability to fire ineffective faculty. In reality, universities have procedures in place to evaluate faculty performance on an annual basis, just like employees in other sectors, and faculty can be dismissed for poor performance. For these reasons, I hope you will vote against HB2348.

I am submitting this testimony on my own behalf, not as a representative of Washburn University.

¹ <https://www.k-state.edu/engagement/economic-impact/>

² <https://iris.isr.umich.edu/>

³ <https://news.ku.edu/news/article/ku-research-growth-fuels-kansas-economy-improves-lives>