

My name is Gene Rice. I am the President of the local Fort Hays State University Chapter of American Association of University Professors and American Federation of Teachers (FHSU AAUP-AFT). **I oppose HB2348**. As written, this proposal “solves” problems which don’t exist. Should it become law however, it will undoubtedly leave the hardworking students, faculty, and indeed the entire state of Kansas, far weaker.

1. Tenure at FHSU is already expressly defined as **NOT a right** in our Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between faculty at Fort Hays State University, the administration at Fort Hays State University, the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), and the Kansas Department of Administration, “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)
2. Tenure as already expressly defined in the MOA does **NOT provide a life-long appointment** without checks and balances. Tenured faculty can be fired for cause and are subject to merit review. In fact, Article X of our MOA lays out the extensive process for Post Tenure Review that all tenured faculty must complete.
3. HB2348 is a short-sighted attempt to **usurp the long-standing contract** between Fort Hays State 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. “The Employer recognizes FHSU-AAUP as the exclusive representative for the University Faculty Bargaining Unit for the purpose of meeting and conferring with respect to grievances and conditions of employment as certified on May 5, 2000, by the Kansas Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) in case number 75-UDC-1-1999.” (MOA, Article II.1, pg 1).
4. In addition, the bill will effectively strip the property rights of thousands of faculty members across the state. **Academic freedom is a bedrock principle of tenure and protects faculty of all political persuasions.** Tenure allow faculty to follow and teach the truth of their respective disciplines to the best of their abilities, even when their research is not popular or endorsed by administrators.
5. HB2348 will thus negatively affect national university rankings and accreditations with the Higher Learning Commission. In fact, **universities throughout Kansas will be red-flagged in academic circles as far weaker institutions.** Faculty members will be lost and we can expect that significant revenue will be lost from grants, tuition, tax dollars, and other monies.
6. In summation, gutting tenure, as HB2348 proposes, will thus directly harm FHSU and our students from Western Kansas, who deserve a university that can attract and retain the talented faculty members who both help innovate solutions to our ever-changing world as well as prepare our students to lead this state.

## POSSIBLE ADDITIONS AFTER 2/11/2025 Testimony:

From PETE:

Our colleges and universities rely heavily on faculty who contribute countless hours to the success of their institutions in ways that do not help their credentials on the national job market. Without the job security that the tenure status quo provides, they would be incentivized to stop dedicating themselves to the success of their institutions and instead focus exclusively on padding their resumes. On the national and international academic job markets, even just one prestigious publication counts for more than any amount of local teaching excellence or service, especially at a college or university in a rural state. For this reason, getting rid of tenure is a bad idea everywhere and an especially bad idea for a state like Kansas.