



SB 18 is an Assault on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech

TLEEC Testimony on SB 18: Tenure and Faculty Employment, Submitted to Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education, March 30, 2023

Members of the Subcommittee on Higher Education:

The Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC) is a collaborative of over 20 organizations and individuals with the mission to improve the quality of public education for all children, with a focus on racial equity. We advocate at the local, state, and national levels for high-quality teaching, curriculum and instructional practices and bilingual education for emergent bilingual students, as well as fair funding and enhanced college access and success.

SB 18 is an assault on academic freedom, it infringes on state employees' freedom of speech, threatens the credibility of academic research, and destabilizes colleges and universities. The removal of tenure replaces academic and economic security with fear and corruptibility.

Assault on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech: If tenure is removed, professors will no longer be able to teach and conduct research without the influence of political pressures – conservative, liberal or moderate. It also begins to impose first amendment rights in academia.

Threatens Credible Research: If tenure is removed, both teaching and research will become biased and lack credibility. Texas will no longer be a leader in trailblazing research but will be slow and hesitate to new ideas and developments in research out of fear of political backlash. This bill will weaken Texas' leadership in academic research.

Destabilizes Colleges and Universities: Following the pursuit of these previous effects, SB 18 will create a decrease in the ability to recruit and retain high-quality and diverse faculty to our colleges and universities. Professors and research leaders will be hard, if not impossible, to recruit. Our institutions will either lose talented candidates or have to offer higher wages and benefits to become strong competitors to colleges and universities who still have tenure. The removal of tenure will also put Black, Latino, women, and other vulnerable faculty at risk to undue process, unfair and biased evaluations.

Texas has several academic and economic goals in place to ensure that our students be well educated and that our state grow to its fullest potential. If bills like SB 18 are passed, we will not meet our goals and can potentially lead to a decline in research status if we are not able to recruit high quality researchers and research that is not easily influenced by political and social environments.

For questions, please contact TLEEC either through Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes at IDRA

Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition

(chloe.sikes@idra.org), or Jaime Puente at Every Texan (puente@everytexan.org).

The Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC) is a collaborative of organizations and individuals with the mission to improve the quality of public education for all children, with a focus on racial equity. The coalition convenes organizations and individuals who advocate in the interest of public school students at the local, state and national levels.

TLEEC Member Organizations

ARISE Adelante	National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS)
Austin Justice Coalition	– Tejas Foco
Breakthrough Central Texas	San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD)	Texas American Federation of Teachers
Children at Risk	Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE)
Dr. Hector P. García G.I. Forum	Texas Association for Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE)
Easterseals Central Texas	Texas Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (TADOHE)
Educators in Solidarity	Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC)
Ethnic Studies Network of Texas (ESNTX)	Texas Center for Education Policy, University of Texas – Austin
Every Texan	Texas Hispanics Organized for Political Education (HOPE)
Houston Community Voices for Public Education	Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association) Measure	Texas NAACP
McNeil Educational Foundation for Ecumenical Leadership	The Arc of Texas
Mexican American Civil Rights Institute (MACRI)	UnidosUS (formerly known as NCLR)
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)	
Mexican American School Boards Association (MASBA)	