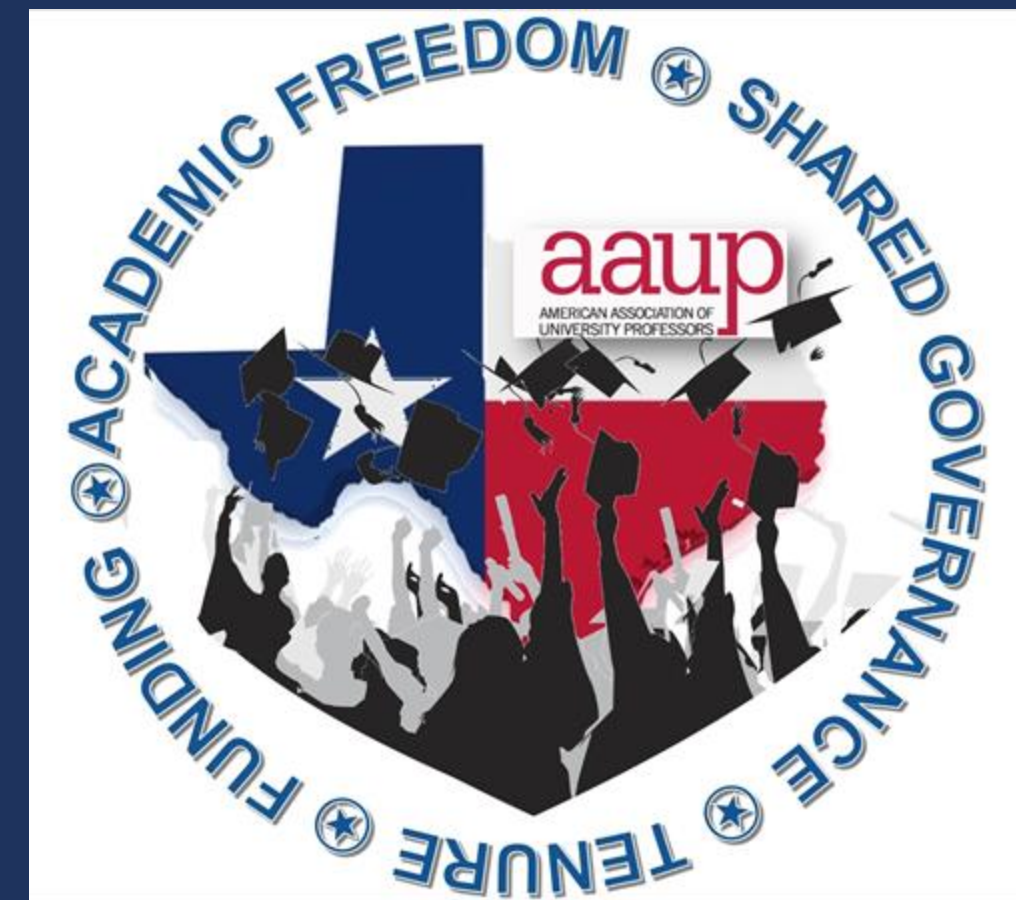


# Higher Ed Legislative Advocacy: Updates & How to Get Involved

Hosted by Texas AAUP-AFT  
February 17, 2025

Presenters are speaking for themselves  
as private individuals



# COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

- We listen respectfully and demonstrate respect for different perspectives and experiences shared during discussions.
- Please mute yourself when you are not talking.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.
- It's okay to say you don't know enough about a question to contribute.
- We recognize how our own social positionality (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, ability) informs our perspectives and reactions to the event content and activities (e.g., discussions, polls, break-outs)
- Presenters are speaking for themselves as private individuals

# AGENDA

- Academic freedom/shared governance
- Higher ed bills in the Texas Legislature
- Getting involved remotely & in person
- Sign up!

# ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- Teachers need freedom to teach so students have freedom to learn.
- Free inquiry, free expression, intellectual exploration, and open dissent are critical for student learning and the advancement of knowledge.
- Academic freedom is the freedom from censorship by the institution in the instructional staff 's teaching, research, and expression.
- AF allows instructors to develop/disseminate new knowledge from all viewpoints, including conservative, moderate, liberal, apolitical.
- Safeguards include shared governance, tenure and due process.
- Codified in the [1940 AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#) adopted by all Texas public university systems as well as many community colleges and private institutions in Texas

# SHARED GOVERNANCE

- Higher ed Administration delegates tasks using a division of labor
- Shared decision-making among students, staff, faculty, administrators, and board of governors based on communication, trust, mutual understanding, and transparency
- Faculty (due to expertise) have primary decision-making authority
  - Curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction
  - Matters related to faculty status – appointments, reappointments, non-reappointments, promotions, granting of tenure, dismissal
- Faculty have authority in financial exigency and program closures
- 1966 AAUP Statement of Government of Colleges and Universities adopted by more than 1500 colleges and universities in the US

# 89th LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- Nov. 11, 2024. First day bills could be filed.
- Jan. 14, 2025. Opening day. Speaker Dustin Burrows (R) elected.
- Jan. 17, 2025. Senate Committees announced.
- Jan. 29, 2025. Lt. Governor announced titles of 25 of 40 priority bills.
- Feb. 13, 2025. House Committees announced.
- Feb. 17, 2025. Today.
- March 14, 2025. Deadline for bills to be filed (60th day of session).
- June 2, 2025. Session ends.
- Special sessions lasting 30 days can be called by the Governor

Brandon  
Creighton  
(R) Chair



Donna  
Campbell (R)  
Co-Chair



# Senate Comm. on Education K-

# 16

Senate Higher Education  
Subcommittee folded  
into Education Comm.



Paul  
Bettencourt (R)



Brent  
Hagenbuch (R)



Adam  
Hinojosa (R)



Phil  
King (R)



José  
Menéndez (D)



Mayes  
Middleton (R)



Tan  
Parker (R)



Angela  
Paxton (R)



Royce  
West (D)

# House Comm. on Higher Ed



Representative  
**Wilson, Terry M.**

Chair



Representative  
**Howard, Donna**

Vice Chair

Terry Wilson (R) Chair  
Donna Howard (D) Co-Chair



Representative  
**Davis, Aicha M.**



Representative  
**Lalani, Suleman**



Representative  
**Lambert, Stan**



Representative  
**Perez, Vincent M.**

Seniority Appointments  
Stan Lambert (R)  
Vincent Perez (D)  
Matt Shaheen (R)  
Tony Tinderholt (R)



Representative  
**Shaheen, Matt**



Representative  
**Shofner, Joanne W.**



Representative  
**Tinderholt, Tony**



Representative  
**VanDeaver, Gary**



Representative  
**Ward Johnson,  
Charlene**

Speaker Appointments  
Aicha Davis (D)  
Suleman Lalani (D)  
Joanne Shofner (R)  
Gary VanDeaver (R)  
Charlene Ward Johnson (D)



# Higher Ed Bills of Concern

- **Tenure**

- **HB 1830 Matt Shaheen (R):** Bans future offering of tenure

- **Shared Governance**

- **SB 452 Mayes Middleton (R):** Gives Boards of Regents and Boards of Trustees the sole authority to appoint heads of academic departments. This overrides shared governance between the faculty and the administration of the college or university.
- **SB 530 Kevin Sparks (R) / HB 1705 Joanne Shofner (R):** Removes the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as the sole accrediting agency for public and private colleges and universities (except for law and medical schools). SACS evaluates the procedures and policies to ensure academic freedom and shared governance.

*The Texas AAUP-AFT is not taking a position for or against any of the above bills at this time..  
Wording in a bill can change during the session.*

*Higher Ed Bill Tracker: <https://aaup-texas.org/blog/f/higher-ed-bills-in-the-2025-texas-legislature>*

# Higher Ed Bills of Concern

- **Academic Freedom**

- **HB 281 Carl Tepper (R) / SB 757 Mayes Middleton (R):** Defunds / discontinues an academic program if the median salary of graduates of the program exceed student loan debt 2 years (BS), 3 years (MS), and 5 years (doctoral) after graduation.
- **HB 2311 Brian Harrison (R):** In the last Legislative session, SB 17 became law. SB 17 prohibits certain diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and practices at public colleges and universities. HB 2311 removes several exemptions including academic course instruction as well as scholarly research and creative works
- **HB 2339 Brian Harrison (R):** forbids public colleges and universities from offering a course, certificate, or degree program (1) in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer studies or (2) diversity, equity, and inclusion. Penalties for an employee include leave without pay for one year on first violation and dismissal on second violation. For any violation, the employee may not be hired at a public college or university in Texas.

*The Texas AAUP-AFT is not taking a position for or against any of the above bills at this time. Wording in a bill can change during the session.*

*Higher Ed Bill Tracker: <https://aaup-texas.org/blog/f/higher-ed-bills-in-the-2025-texas-legislature>*

# Encouraging Legislation

- **Academic freedom**

- **SB 184 José Menéndez (D) & SB 530 Royce West (D):** Adds an exemption to the DEI law SB 17 for research grants.
- **HB 393 John Bucy (D):** Repeals the DEI law SB 17 from the last session.

- **Safety and economic security**

- **SB 187 José Menéndez (D):** Requires a public higher ed institution to have an Internet site and hotline to report discrimination and harassment based on race, color, or ethnicity
- **HB 237 John Bucy (D):** Increases pay for all faculty at public universities and community colleges. There were no pay increases in the State budget in the last session.

*The Texas AAUP-AFT is not taking a position for or against any of the above bills at this time. Wording in a bill can change during the session.*

*Higher Ed Bill Tracker: <https://aaup-texas.org/blog/f/higher-ed-bills-in-the-2025-texas-legislature>*

# Students and Immigration

- **We're flagging this for faculty who might be concerned about how new immigration bills might affect their students and campus**
  - **SB 8 Senate Bill 8 – Requiring Local Law Enforcement to Assist the Federal Government's Deportation Efforts**
  - **HB 160 Leo Wilson (R):** Relating to the enrollment, including resident status and tuition rates, of certain persons, including persons not authorized to be present in the United States, in public institutions of higher education.
  - **HB 232 Cody Vasut (R), HB 424 Richard Hayes (R), HB 979 Briscoe Cain (R), HB 1324 Mike Olcott (R), and HB 1815 Jared Peterson (R):** Relating to the determination of resident status of students by public institutions of higher education

*The Texas AAUP-AFT is not taking a position for or against any of the above bills at this time. Wording in a bill can change during the session.*

*Higher Ed Bill Tracker: <https://aaup-texas.org/blog/f/higher-ed-bills-in-the-2025-texas-legislature>*

# Getting Involved Remotely

- ❖ Come to these monthly legislative updates! Mar. 24, Apr. 21, and May 19 at 6pm CT.
- ❖ Sign the [Texas AFT Educator's Bill of Rights](#) for K-12 and higher ed educators.
- ❖ Get active in your [AAUP Campus Chapter](#), or help form one if there isn't one.
- ❖ Look for opportunities for advocacy on [Texas AFT Mobilize](#) such as phone banking, email campaigns, and local office visits.

# Getting Involved in Person

From Mobilize <https://www.mobilize.us/texasaft/>

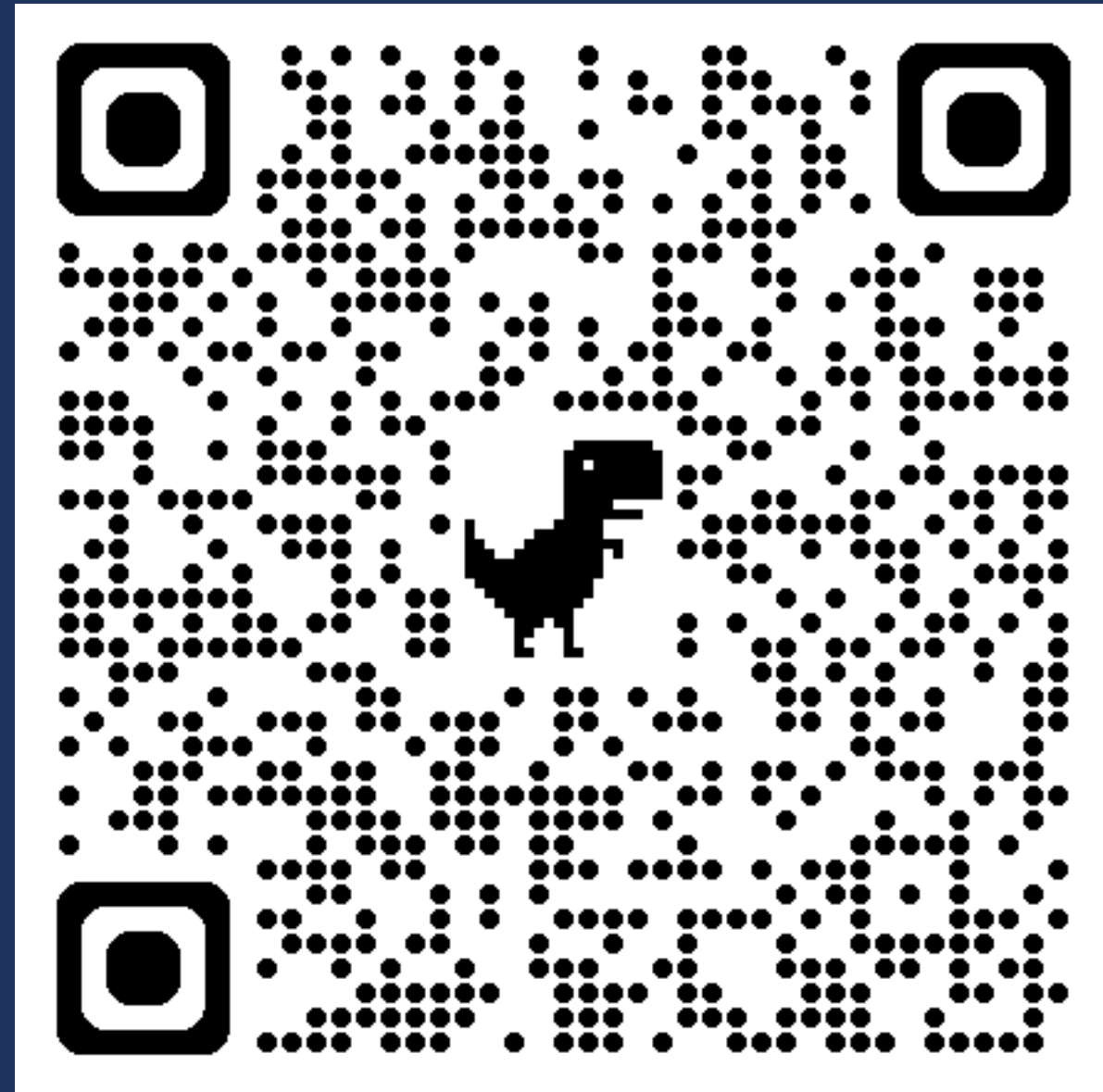
- ❖ Join Texas AAUP-AFT to visit Legislative Offices Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30am-12:30pm.
- ❖ Join Texas AAUP-AFT for an Advocacy Day on Friday, Feb. 21, 8:30am-12:00pm.
  - RSVP to [aaup.texas@gmail.com](mailto:aaup.texas@gmail.com)
- ❖ Join Texas AFT and Texas AAUP-AFT for an Advocacy Day on Monday, March 10 or 17, 2025, depending on your Spring Break schedule
  - RSVP to [aaup.texas@gmail.com](mailto:aaup.texas@gmail.com).
  - Bus service will be provided to the Capitol by a nearby K-12 Texas AFT Local – RSVP on Mobilize

# How to Testify

- ❖ Example [11/7 Hearing Faculty Talking Points](#)
- ❖ Write your testimony beforehand.
- ❖ Please be clear that you're speaking for yourself as a private individual.
- ❖ Max 2 minutes for a Senate hearing and 3 minutes for a House hearing (one page)
- ❖ Review background info for context, like hearing agendas and invited speakers
- ❖ Tell your story! Personal narratives are important to testimonies, so tie how it impacts you and others back to the issues, and make the call to action clear!

# Join Texas AAUP-AFT Action Committees

- **Join Texas AAUP-AFT Action Committees!**
  - Legislative Advocacy
  - Organizing
  - Media & Messaging
  - Legal Analysis
- **1 year commitment**





**Thank you!**