

EDUCATOR'S Bill of Rights

We are losing educators in droves in Texas schools, and that includes in higher education, where faculty and staff are heading for the exits thanks to low pay, persistent attacks on academic freedom, and villainization of their work by state elected officials.

Texas AFT's 66,000 members across the state have developed an Educator's Bill of Rights, and we're bringing it to the Legislature in 2025. Here's some of what's included for higher education employees:

● YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO FAIR WAGES.

Much like K-12 schools in Texas, higher education institutions statewide are also experiencing staffing shortages, with unfair wages as a major contributing factor. Significant budgetary investments must be made in the faculty and staff at Texas colleges and universities.

● YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A HEALTHY, SAFE, AND SECURE WORK ENVIRONMENT.

Safety is a prerequisite for learning. Right now, Texas is failing our students and educators on multiple fronts in providing them with a safe learning and working environment. In Texas AFT's 2024 member survey, gun violence prevention was ranked as the No. 1 priority out of 11 community and social justice issues.

● YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

Any assault on public education is an assault on our professional duties in educating the next generation of citizens. In higher education, protecting tenure and ending the attacks on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs ensures Texas colleges and universities can recruit and retain the best and brightest academic minds to open the world to our students.

● YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION IN THE WORKPLACE.

Empowered educators produce engaged students. History consistently shows how unions can raise the bar for all of us. And that includes our children's teachers and school staff, as well as their professors, adjunct professors, and collegiate support staff. If educators have a voice in their workplace, free from fear of retaliation, they can negotiate and win better working and learning environments.

WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR **TOGETHER.**

- Shared governance: Efforts by politicians and activist governing boards to shape the content of university classrooms have disrupted the learning environment and endangered our ability to recruit and retain qualified educators. We must codify the rights of university faculty to participate in the governance of their campus and to shape the content of their own classrooms.
- Instruct without fear: We have experienced an exodus of faculty amid threats against diversity, equity, and inclusion, and faculty are fearful of losing their jobs if they step out of line to teach the truth. The Legislature must restore full tenure rights to Texas faculty in higher education and repeal TEC 28.0022.
- Celebrate & uplift diversity, equity, and inclusion: The manufactured threat of DEI has hurt faculty recruitment efforts and has resulted in lost grant monies for universities. The state must restore the critical and long-standing student services that helped many first-generation students to thrive on Texas university campuses.

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