

UNITED FACULTY OF FLORIDA

2023 Legislative Session - Week 2



Bills We're Watching

[HB 999 / SB 266 "Public Postsecondary Educational Institutions"](#)

[SB 256 / HB 1445 - "Employee Organizations Representing Public Employees"](#)

Pictured: UFF President Andrew Gothard testifying before the Senate Postsecondary Education Committee

TAKE ACTION!

[Click here](#) to
(1) admonish those who voted against your freedoms and
(2) thank those who stood up for you in the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee.

[Click here](#) to email the members of the House State Affairs Committee and ask them to oppose anti-union HB 1445.

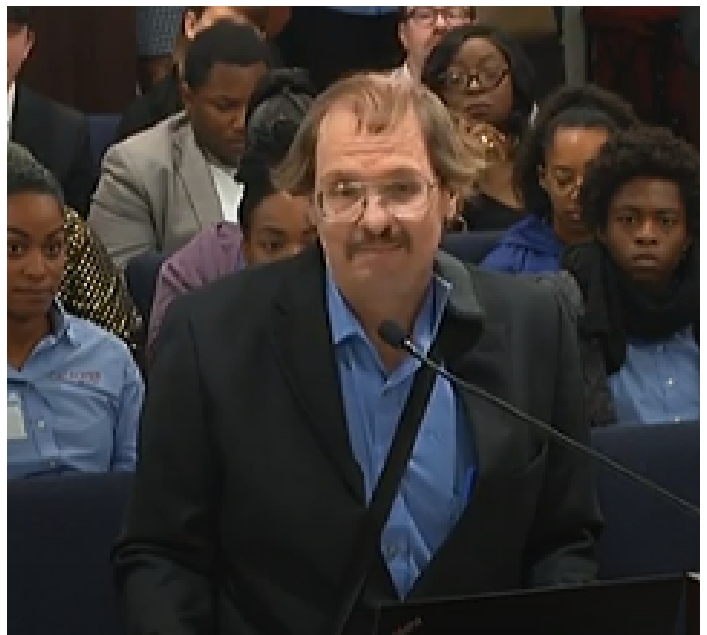
This Week in Tallahassee

Despite fierce opposition from hundreds of students, faculty, faith leaders, civil rights leaders, union members, and more, committees in both the House and Senate advanced major anti-freedom bills along party line votes.

HB 999 - "Public Postsecondary Educational Institutions" was heard on 3/13 by the House Postsecondary Education and Workforce Subcommittee. Over 200 members of the public showed up and spoke in strong opposition against the bill, with only one student speaking in favor. Republican House members gave almost no debate and asked only a handful of questions before ramming the legislation through. In addition, the bill was made substantially worse through the acceptance of a committee substitute that expands the range of banned majors and minors, provides broader cause for post-tenure review, and threatens funding for student groups in an increased bid for state sponsored indoctrination of Florida's students. Access the hearing recording [here](#).

The Senate companion to this bill, **SB 266 - "Higher Education,"** found a committee substitute that moves further away from the House version

by removing direct bans on majors and minors, refusing to define cause for post-tenure review at any time, and deleting statute language from 2022 that forces Florida's colleges and universities to change accreditors; however, the bill still contains language that compels faculty speech around the teaching of history and other key subject areas, places full authority to hire faculty into the hands of the campus president and Boards of Trustees, and risks a widespread accreditation crisis through attacks on academic freedom. Further, the Education Postsecondary Committee refused **an amendment** that would have protected faculty from undergoing post-tenure review due to their political affiliation and/or expression of their constitutional rights. Access the hearing recording **here**.



Pictured: UFF-USF member Greg McColm testifying before the Senate Postsecondary Education Committee. Go, Greg!



Pictured: UFF-FSU member Anne Barrett testifying against HB 999 in House committee. Great work, Anne!

Similarly, **SB 256 / HB 1445 - "Employee Organizations Representing Public Employees"** advanced through committees in the House and Senate this week. Elected Republican leaders looked on dispassionately, many even seeming bored by the perspectives of the people they are elected to represent, and voted through measures that will strip public employees of our rights to organize and collectively bargain.

Meanwhile, bills that will actually help Florida's higher education system remain stalled in committee, as they do not align with Gov. DeSantis's politics of hate. If conservative leaders made anything clear this week, it is this—separation of powers no longer exists in the so-called "free state of Florida."

Despite these setbacks, now is not the time to give up hope. There are a number of actions you can take to defend the freedoms of all Floridians:

- Contact those who voted against your freedoms, and thank those who stood up for you in the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee, **both of which can be done from this linked form**.
- **Email the members of the House State Affairs Committee** and ask them to oppose the House version of SB 256, HB 1445.
- Email or call your local Senator and Representative and tell them to protect unions and our beloved institutions of higher education.

Not sure who to contact? Find your locally elected legislator **here**!