

Templated Email to Your Representatives Concerning HB 2735

Email Content

Dear AZ House Representative:

I'm writing as a concerned citizen of Arizona in opposition to House Bill 2735 that passed the House Appropriations committee on Wednesday, Feb. 14. This bill would grant the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) and University Presidents the authority to shut down programs and departments, eliminate faculty and staff positions, and dictate all aspects of teaching and learning at our universities. This move directly attempts to eliminate the responsibilities of faculty in overseeing academic activities. Instead, this move places all educational activities of all three state universities under the authority under the Regents. The Regents are not teachers or scholars, they do not conduct research or work with students. They are political appointees with close connections to politicians and elite interests. These changes would give the political elites control of all aspects of the teaching and learning at our universities.

HB 2735 specifically changes the existing statutes to eliminate faculty involvement in governance, policy, personnel, and educational activities. The proposed bill strikes from the law the role of the faculty in governance and oversight and limits faculty as consultants to the Regents on "academic and educational activities." While the existing law, ARS 15-1601, states that faculty "shall share responsibility for" and "shall actively participate in" academic and educational matters, the proposed bill limits faculty to only "CONSULT WITH" the Board of Regents. By changing the current law, which was passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support in 1992, the Regents will be legislatively mandated to directly manage the curriculum and personnel of every unit on every campus. This move strips the autonomy and authority of faculty, department heads, and deans from overseeing academic programs and their educational mandate. This bill undermines the democratic foundations of our institutions and elevates unilateral powers of appointed political managers.

If passed, these changes would give the Regents and the Presidents the ability to approve and dissolve programs, fire faculty, and direct all aspects of teaching and learning at our universities. I am concerned that these administrators will attempt to reshape the mission of our universities to serve the public, to businesses designed to support corporate interests. Our universities were founded to educate and serve the people of Arizona and educate citizens for the future. *Who should be in charge of education and academic matters at the University of Arizona, political appointees and politicians of ABOR or the teachers, scholars, and renowned researchers of our universities?*

Please express your opposition to these bills publicly and vote against their passage.

Thank you for your consideration,

[your name]

Some Key Talking Points

If passed, HB 2735 will:

- Grant ABOR and the Presidents the ability to approve (or disapprove) academic programs and units.
- Give power to University Presidents to cut and dismantle programs and departments and thus, fire faculty (tenured or non-tenure track) and staff.
- Eliminate the role of the faculty, through elected bodies, from sharing responsibility for and participating in academic oversight and policies.
- Eliminate the decision-making capacity of department chairs, deans, and other leading faculty, in favor of the president.
- Grant ABOR all power to “administer” and “govern” all accounting and finances at each institution.

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