HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Submitted to the Committee on Higher Education

For SB 37

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Hearing Date: May 6, 2025 8:00 AM

Alexander Calloway

Texas Rising

Dallas, TX

This policy is an infringement on 1st amendment rights. It is a desperate attempt to have oversight over what's taught and that is not freedom. Please do not pass this bill.

Luke Roelofs

Self (University Professor)

Arlington, TX

I really hope that the committee will vote AGAINST this bill, which would fatally undermine higher education in Texas in its pursuit of greater political control over universities.

I am a professor at UT-Arlington and proud to serve Texas students. I am submitting this testimony in my personal capacity as someone concerned with the health of Texas' universities, because I fear that this bill will strangle the institution I work at, censor my teaching, and drive away talented applicants.

SB37 creates multiple new bodies and layers of bureaucracy, staffed by political appointees, to take over and micromanage jobs that are currently done by faculty with specific expertise and on-the-ground awareness. It's a power grab at multiple levels, and will make the running of Texas universities slower, more expensive, and worse.

But the thing that worries me most about this bill is its attempt to curtail teaching on social topics. It uses the language of neutrality, of prohibiting courses that enforce ideological views, but this is a transparent pretext. I have no desire to enforce anything on my students; my primary goal as a teacher of philosophy is to get them to think for themselves. But to do that I have to be able to present them with difficult questions and challenging ideas, to play devil's advocate for whatever beliefs they express, and to draw their attention to tensions and conflicts between different ideas. If someone is being paid find politically disfavored ideologies, then for any well-taught, challenging, philosophy course it would be easy for them to find something to object to and shut down the course or fire the instructor. In practice, this means that my colleagues and I will have to teach while looking over our shoulders, with a constant temptation to self-censor and stick to safe, bland topics that avoid anything controversial. But I think it's teaching on controversial questions that benefits students the most.

I came to Texas just under 2 years ago, attracted by its vibrant university sector, and have found a lot to love at UTA. But bills like this make me second-guess my decision, and force me to start contemplating whether, and when, I might have to move away again. More immediately, many applicants for university positions will see bills like this and decide to go somewhere they can get on with their work in peace. That will be bad for my university, for the state's economy, and most of all for our students. Please do not blow up a thriving sector for greater political control.

Kavita Singh, Dr.
self
Houston, TX

These are my personal views, not those of any institution/ organization. I oppose SB37.
“I feel like I’m back in Cuba,” a friend said when we read SB37’s proposed changes, which are sweeping and unprecedented—at least unprecedented in democratic countries that value freedom. They were talking about living in a repressive totalitarian country, where thought, speech, and action are controlled by the state. Many left Cuba for this reason. The USA promised liberation from the mental control that makes communist societies terrifying to those within them and those living without. Controlling what is taught in university curricula through any mechanism other than intellectual inquiry, peer review, and research and pedagogical methods developed over centuries of free thinking: this is what stifles invention, dulls ambition, and creates a dissatisfied, subversive, and unpatriotic population. These are the reasons that democratic countries fear communist regimes, and their citizenry resist them.
When faculty teach about such regimes and the principles behind them, they give students the tools to recognize the signs of such dangerous moves. For ex, language in Sec. 51.3523 states that “Institutions of higher education in this state shall be governed by a principle of shared governance… in which the governing board of the institution exercises ultimate authority and responsibility,” and the “principle of shared governance may not be construed to diminish the authority of the governing board to make final decisions in the best interest of the institution, students, and taxpayers.” A student must wonder why this governing board’s power sounds so much like “decisions in the best interest of the people,” a typical justification of communist authoritarianism—undemocratically decided “shared interests.” And when the bill states “Administrators must make decisions in a manner that promotes efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness to state priorities, workforce needs, and the institution's institutional mission,” one must wonder how these arbitrary “state priorities” are different from the claims of governments that create mass discontent by deciding on “workforce needs”— like communism.
For centuries, and with good evidence (per technological, scientific, and social advances by American universities) experts in each field have marshalled, mediated, and decided on the value and legitimacy of research and teaching. Yet SB37 decides that “Faculty and staff input is only advisory in nature, ensuring that governing boards and institutional leadership retain clear and ultimate decision-making authority.” Is there any precedent showing that such uneducated oversight will contribute to excellence, creativity, or innovation—which institutions of higher education in Texas have proudly provided since their inception?
A student taught an uncensored curriculum might well wonder: Why is a Texas legislature mimicking Cuba?
Thank you for your time,
Dr. Kavita Singh

Margaret Mills
Self - Social Worker
AUSTIN, TX

I’m a retired Social Worker, after over 30 years in this field, primarily in Child Protective Services but also rotations in a psychiatric hospital and a Child Guidance Center. I earned my Masters degree in Social work at the University of Texas at Austin. I am urging you to VOTE NO on SB 37 in every aspect of its interpretation.

My experience was with families whose problem issues resulted in neglectful and abusive behavior. Many often included a flawed idea of parenthood, dysfunctional childhood dynamics, poor coping skills or the freedom to express their thoughts or emotions. Most need opportunities to learn other ways of functioning, and integrating new information and skills. SB 37 proposes that political interference or controls be part of an institution of higher learning; thos institutions which are designed to prepare graduates for critical thinking in their careers and lives. SB 37 runs counter to the educational aims of this or any constructive learning environment. A constructive learning environment would most helpfully include exposure to positive and negative societal norms, and freedom to explore and compare those concepts in many contexts.

This bill is appallingly destructive in its breadth - affecting public colleges and universities and including health care institutions. It is counter-productive to a university’s aims of valuable norms or well-functioning mechanisms of advisory input and decision making, which gives students extensive oversight, and replaces them with costly, bureaucratic, political controls that will drive down our service to Texas and our ability to attract students, faculty, and administrators. It will be a grave mistake to ignore the on the ground expertise, hard work by local faculty and administrators.

The bill seeks to control curriculum from faculty who are expert in their disciplines, to distant and ideological political appointees and administrators. Its broad language is almost certain to chill and damage freedom of speech, a bedrock needed for educating students and integrating research towards education and learning - on many aspects of vocational and career goals, personal and family functioning, and public service.

College and university students need oral and written communication skills in all aspects of their adult lives – skills from both in the fields of their career goals, and those outside that discipline. These are vital exchanges for students and faculty to discuss freely and prepare for life in so many contexts.

I urgently advise a NO vote on SB 37.

Cary Cordova, Dr.
Self, Professor.
Austin, TX

Hello. My name is Dr. Cary Cordova. I am writing as a private citizen, not representing any institution or organization, though I also am a faculty member at the University of Texas at Austin, as well as the parent of a high schooler who is thinking about college applications in just a few years. I appreciate this opportunity to express my strong opposition to SB 37.

While Forbes recently listed UT Austin as part of a new class of Ivy League schools, called "New Ivies," that new found prestige is likely to diminish with this bill in place. My opposition is not out of faculty arrogance, but out of concern for our university's capacity to engage students in difficult topics and to introduce students to complex ideas and research. I am alarmed by this effort to crush what faculty can teach in classrooms without any respect for their fields of expertise. It will intimidate faculty from discussing topics of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, and religion, all of which are topics critical to teaching in the humanities – and the sciences. The lines of what will be teachable will be transformed into a gray area that will absolutely chill speech and diminish the education of our students.

While students that attend private Ivy League schools will continue to benefit from spaces that engage a multitude of ideas, Texas public school students will received a censored education. Public universities will also be limited in terms of recruiting the best students and faculty. Any national reputation that Texas universities have acquired as premier research institutions will be undermined by this political maneuvering of higher education curriculums. This bill also diminishes faculty governance and disregards the accreditation processes that already exist for higher education (for instance, via the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges).

So, if you would like to decrease the value of a college degree from a public university in Texas, then this bill has every capacity to deliver that effect.

Please do not pass this bill.

Caroline Sage Ponder, Dr.
self, university faculty
Austin, TX

My name is Sage Ponder and I am a faculty member at UT-Austin, testifying against all versions of SB 37. I am submitting testimony as a private citizen.

There is a market for higher education in which Texas schools compete for the brightest minds. Texas has so far been very successful in attracting the most talented minds to both work and learn here, and this has generated countless dollars for our state economy over the years.

The market has reacted to similar legislation already passed in Florida over the past several years swiftly and soundly, as illustrated by the severe fall in rankings for that state's flagship university. Since then, University of Florida lost its position as a top public university in major rankings outlets such as US News and World Report. Indeed, the Wall Street Journal ranked UF the top public institution overall in 2024 only to see it fall 33 spots to number 34 in 2025.

This is the market communicating to Florida leadership that what they are doing is destroying value for the state. The brightest, most competitive minds no longer consider the state's flagship university to offer a reasonable return on investment. If SB37 is passed the same will happen here. It will destroy the ability of Texas higher education to compete for the best and the brightest, both outside and inside of Texas.

I am one of the many Florida faculty who left the state last year after legislation similar in intent and scope to proposed Senate Bill 37 made working conditions impossible. Should SB 37 be passed into law, it will devastate the functionality of the state's public college and university systems. On a pragmatic level, the amount of oversight required to implement new rules by chairs and Deans hampers faculty ability to accomplish even simple tasks. The sheer amount of faculty departures also made work life incredibly chaotic. Departments are now unable to cover core courses due to lack of qualified instructors, which lengthens time to graduation for students. Florida's top high school students are now choosing to seek credentials outside of the state, leaving behind a less capable, less driven, less competitive student body for Florida's employers to draw from.

The data also supports my personal experience:
• The Chronicle of Higher Education reported that 9 of the 12 public universities in
Florida experienced "significant spikes" in faculty resignations in 2022. FSU lost 28% of its faculty (136 people resigned) that year. Far higher than in previous years. UF lost 20% of its faculty that year (391 people), and in my experience , search committees in FL are seeing declines in total amount of applications received to replace faculty lines as well as a sharp fall in quality of applications.

•If Texas chooses this it will be left with a less capable, less competitive workforce, as evidenced by the steep fall in standardized test scores for the previous FL honors college, a glimpse into what SB 37 would do to the UT system as well

Rani Dubey
Self, Texas Ex
Austin, TX

I am writing to oppose SB 37, as this bill will cause major damage to our economy and credibility of our institutions here and abroad. I am a proud graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, and I continue to remain involved in my community. My late husband greatly contributed to the UT community as a sustained donor, and we remained in Texas since graduating largely due to the excellent public schools, including universities where my kids also received degrees. It saddens me to see these bills that will negatively impact the educational institutions that shaped our lives and provided us immense opportunities. I am concerned for how this bill will reduce faculty and student retention due to increased scrutiny over what is taught in the classroom. I am also concerned with the decrease in long term opportunities and recruitment from public universities in Texas due to the decreased quality of education.
I urge you all listen to your taxpayers who fund these institutions by voting no on SB 37. By voting no on this bill, you are preserving the world renowned institutions that I and so many others came for and extending the opportunities I received for generations to come.

Trina Martin
Self
Round Rock, TX

Hello my name is Trina Martin and I am asking you to vote no on SB37. College curriculum is going to need to be as flexible and well rounded as possible because this generation doesn't have the luxury of picking careers as entering freshman. They have to view schooling as constant "skill building" for a variety of jobs that haven't been invented yet. The most important skills will be the 21st century soft skills that are taught through arts and humanities courses, extra curricular activities, etc. Most importantly they have to have grit and the ability to pivot! As a parent of two young adults who are now quite successful in areas that were not necessarily the plan when they graduated high school or even college, I have witnessed this first hand. Luckily all through middle and high school I didn't follow the suggestions of counselors who wanted them to take more science and math and less dance, especially not the extra dance officer period. My daughters will both tell you they use the skills they learned in their dance programs more than anything. The ability to present, work on a team, meet a deadline and most important... pivot when the job you thought you wanted is no longer there. In fact 11 years ago in a parent assembly at a highly rated elementary school in Central Texas, we were told our children will not have jobs if they don't get a STEM degree. Now those students are juniors and seniors in college and the jobs for STEM majors are not guaranteed. So many are having to pivot before they ever start their careers, including my daughter who was planning to get a research PHD but the funding is gone. Luckily she taught at her dance studio all through college to keep her sanity between lab work and neuroscience classes. Now she at least has a varied skill set for a wide variety of jobs she can do for while until she decides what's next. Luckily she didn't only take science courses for all of her electives starting in HS.
For some additional data, Google conducted an HR study that looked at the most successful people in their company and what their background were. Conclusion was top performers and teams had more soft skills from arts/ humanities and bottom was those with only technical skills from STEM! If we are only focusing on the skill set that can meet an immediate job need we are robbing the next generation of the ability to develop to skills like communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity that will make them stand out as a candidate and rise to the top once they get the job.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/12/20/the-surprising-thing-google-learned-about-its-employees-and-what-it-means-for-todays-students/

Cynthia Daniels
Self
Mansfield, TX

I strongly oppose SB 37. This bill represents an unprecedented and dangerous political intrusion into the governance, curriculum, and academic freedom of public colleges and universities in Texas. Rather than supporting higher education, SB 37 would erode the core values that make our institutions effective: the freedom to teach, research, and learn without political interference.

By increasing state oversight of curriculum and degree programs, weakening the authority of faculty councils and senates, and threatening penalties, SB 37 politicizes education and undermines the expertise of the very people who make our colleges and universities function: the faculty, staff, and students. The proposed ombudsman office and new bureaucratic layers would not promote accountability but would instead be used to chill speech, suppress diverse perspectives, and enforce ideological conformity.

Texans deserve strong, independent institutions of higher learning where students are prepared for the real world, not a sanitized political version of it. Education should challenge us, broaden our perspectives, and equip us with the tools to engage a complex society, not limit ideas to what is politically convenient or palatable to those in power.

SB 37 does not serve students, faculty, or the future of Texas. I urge lawmakers to reject this overreach and instead invest in strengthening academic excellence, diversity, and student success across our higher education system.

Emma Lopez
self - student
Austin, TX

I am writing as a private individual, and I ask that you oppose SB 37. I am born and raised in Austin, and I went to Texas public school, a Texas university, and now I am a graduate student at UT Austin. I know firsthand the value of a Texas education, and I urge you to oppose this bill and protect my institution and others across Texas from state government control.

I work daily with my professors. I trust their expertise, I trust the knowledge that they continue to provide me with, and they have helped me to grow exponentially as a scholar and a person. I have also worked with Texas politicians and bureaucrats. I know that this will lead to subjective decisions being made regarding programs and courses with which the governor and other conservative lawmakers disagree. Simply because our lawmakers do not understand our courses does not mean that they do not have tremendous value. These lawmakers tend to believe that fields within the humanities and social sciences do not lead to employment following graduation. However, it was my humanities degree that landed me full time employment serving my community after graduation. It is my humanities PhD that will get me employment as a professor and researcher. Every student, regardless of their degree program, can gain expertise and skills from courses which teach them writing, critical thinking skills, problem solving, collaboration, etc. SB 37 would unfairly impact these courses, who conservatives will choose to limit under the guise of concerns for students career paths, when those of us who take these courses understand that this will in reality prohibit honest instruction and conversation about US history and current events.

I have also worked at a university in student services, advising students in their career planning, networking, seeking internships, etc. I mention this experience to showcase that university staff and faculty know that a degree alone is not enough to attain employment. Rather than focusing on curriculum, I urge you to recognize true barriers to financial mobility post graduation: economic instability, housing crises, inaccessible health care. Instead of limiting offered curriculum, provide more opportunities for students to seek meaningful employment during their undergraduate experience. This bill is a thinly veiled attack on progressive faculty and courses which teach a diverse range of viewpoints. As a student, engaging with students and faculty with all belief systems is what allows genuine learning and identity formation.

At best, this bill is a misguided attempt to support students in attaining an education; in reality, this bill would disproportionately impact humanities and social sciences fields and faculty. We are already seeing the impacts of SB17 on faculty retention, and if SB37 is implemented, we will continue to see brilliant faculty leaving and fewer faculty applicants. I ask that you vote no on SB37 and protect Texas higher education.

Catherine Harrel
self - RN
Corpus Christi, TX

I am firmly opposed. As a nursing faculty member i have seen the negative unintended consequences of SB 1429. Curriculum belongs to faculty and the government should not get involved. Also, shared governance is an important avenue for faculty feedback and involvement. Just like the general community elects senators and representatives for the Texas legislature, so should electing faculty senate members belong to those they represent - the faculty.

Keshav Pingali, Dr.
The University of Texas at Austin/Professor of Computer Science/self
Austin, TX

I am a chaired professor of Computer Science at UT Austin. I am a strong supporter of Governor Greg Abbott, a man whom I admire greatly, and I usually vote for the Republican slate in elections. In the past, I have disagreed publicly with my colleagues on DEI. I too would like to see universities teach students to respect and love our country, but I believe SB37 is a very heavy-handed way of ensuring that. It interferes with academic freedom, which all faculty members cherish. It will make it more difficult for us to recruit first-rate faculty members, and in the long term, it will deleterious to the university and to the great state of Texas.

Douglas Cushing, Dr
Self, University Educator
AUSTIN, TX

SB37 troubles me. It exerts ideological control under the guise of checking ideological pedagogy. It creates a coercive, hierarchical apparatus for curbing academic freedom. And it will harm Texas, creating a brain drain.
I am a UT Austin alumnus and lecturer. I research interwar cultural history. What I see here—funding used as a cudgel, seeking political purity—resemble the past. I offer a case study. The Bauhaus (1919-1933) remains one of the most important schools of design in modern history. Yet that school was forced to move from Weimar in Germany in 1925s because of pressure from the far right in Thuringia. By 1931, the National Socialists in Saxony-Anhalt were campaigning against the school promising to cancel its funding, claiming to safeguard taxpayer money. The Nazis sought to close the Bauhaus because it was, to their mind, antithetical to their ideology. SB37 has more incremental and bureaucratic means, but related aims. This bill is a political attack on academic freedom and an attempt to control culture.
Proposed curricula control is absurd. How could a governance board make fine-grained determinations in fields where they are not experts? If I cover the Harlem Renaissance, would I be teaching "identity politics," as discussed in the Senate Committee Report? The ideas of Alain Locke and W.E.B. Du Bois before him are key to understanding a cultural movement that fostered Black pride and self-realization (against a culture that was antagonistic). That history is one that hinges on understanding identity relative to race and politics. The proposed governance would be oppressive without cause. A board choosing leadership smacks of cultural control. One of the first things the Nazis did after 1933 was to force out museum directors on political grounds—all in the pursuit of intellectual purity. There is nothing so antithetical to academic inquiry as homogeneity in discourse. This bill is an assault on intellectual freedom. If the drafters wanted to ensure that professors do not impose ideologies on students through coercion, they could create review committees composed of professors and students. Why not? Because such a structure would not permit top-down cultural control.
The U.S. is bastion for higher education and research. We draw the best students and scholars from around the world. The current administration's fiscal and immigration policies have undermined the United States's standing. SB37 will make the problems worse here. Who would come to Texas and teach, research, or study with an ideological minder looking over your shoulder? When the Nazis sought to control German universities, professionals went into exile. Countries like the United States benefitted. The Bauhaus's Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and others emigrated to the United to teach and practice. This happened across disciplines. SB37 will have a similar effect for Texas, driving talent to states and countries where academic freedom is respected and protected.

Yiping Xia
Self
Cypress, TX

I oppose this bill as a higher ed professional. The content of our curriculum should not be decided by politicians.

Chalandra Robinson
self - social worker
Houston, TX

I am against this bill because it will restrict discussions of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, religion, and social beliefs—anywhere on college/university campuses. I feel that informed residents of this state must be able to discuss these subjects, especially on the college and university setting. Without the ability to practice these rights and responsibilities, we are dooming our youth to a substandard education.

Gina Bastone
Self
Austin, TX

I'm Gina Bastone, and I'm speaking as a private citizen on my own time. These views are entirely my own, and do not represent my employer or any other entity.

I am a librarian, and I have worked in higher education for 12 years. I love working with the college students, and Texas is home to such smart, hard working young people. I am invested in their success as workers in the Texas economy, and I applaud effective efforts to prepare our students for life and work beyond the university. I'm afraid SB 37 is NOT the effective mechanism for job readiness that it claims to be.

Today's students need to be nimble, flexible and resilient as they approach an ever changing economy driven by fast moving technology. They will likely change careers at least once and hold several different jobs over their lifetime. To weather such change, they need collaboration and creative problem-solving abilities that will not just serve them in their first year post-graduation but 20 and 30 years down the road. The hard skills will change and probably become irrelevant over time. But the qualities of flexibility, curiosity and —especially — resilience will serve them far into the future.

As a librarian, I work with students across the university in different majors and academic disciplines. Every so often, I'll work with a STEM student who finds themselves in a humanities class only for a requirement. Normally, one might assume students are disengaged in classes that don't seem relevant or interesting to them.

But I often find these STEM students transform in humanities and social science classes. They come to the library out of curiosity and a desire to learn more, not just to tick and box and get a necessary credit.

But SB 37 will undermine this well rounded curriculum and the very disciplines that will prepare for ALL of our students, no matter their chosen field. Faculty experts are best positioned to decide on curriculum, not political appointees.

SB 37 also jeopardizes students' freedom of speech and first amendment rights. I have grave concerns about the proposed Ombuds Office and complaint process, which will create a culture of fear, censorship and surveillance. At best, this office will be terribly expensive and inefficient. At worst, it is anti-democratic and a violation of the first amendment, leaving the state and universities at risk for expensive, lengthy court battles. Professors and students alike will not feel safe to speak freely in the classroom, and I worry of a chilling effect on staff who work with students, too. Texas will lose. We all will lose. Please vote no on SB 37.

GAUTAM NAYER, DR
SELF PROFESSOR
HOUSTON, TX

please vote against this bill- i do not believe this bill would be helpful for Texans especially those of us who work in higher education. I would ask my representative to vote against this bill thanks

Steven Deline
self
Austin, TX

How is this bill supposed to help Texas students?

Anyone with a basic understanding of economics knows that economies fluctuate over time. This bill would create a perpetual seesaw of new & phased out degrees based on trends. This would make Texas Higher Education less palatable to prospective out-of-state students due to the uncertainty of degrees acquired in Texas being continually funded. Same issue with professors. This would lead to a constant need to recruit out-of-state workers, likely of lower quality due to the uncertainty.

Adding into the bill that institutions will have funding removed on top of that will cause a slippery slope in degrees other than those mandated as necessary by the board.

This is just a bill designed to arbitrarily ban degree types being allowed in Texas with extra steps.

If one were to disregard economic fluctuations, certain post-secondary degrees like MD/DO/PharmD/JD/DDS/DMD/DVM/PhD are likely to leave a student in excessive debt for some time. This is due to the length of time required to obtain said degrees. These degrees will probably be deemed necessary, although the debt ratio will force higher education institutions to forfeit funding for the year basically every year as this bill is written.

This is just a bill designed to arbitrarily defund public institutions of higher learning with extra steps.

Brain drain.
Economic retrogression.
Stop being weird.

Stephen Gross

self - Texas State University Math Lecturer & Alamo Colleges Adjunct Professor

San Marcos, TX

I am Stephen Gross, currently a math instructor at Texas State University San Marcos and I am testifying against SB 37, not on behalf of my department or the university, nor any of the other colleges or public schools I have taught and tutored math and the sciences for since I began graduate school twenty years ago, but from my own personal perspective that results from that extensive experience.

While one may assume that this bill does not affect math, with age old standards that were set centuries and millennia ago, the fact is that teaching math changes continuously, with every semester bringing new challenges in student preparedness that must be addressed in real time. I learned math in graduate school but I am progressively learning to teach math by collaborating with my colleagues and likewise teaching them in the process.

In the next calendar year, I will be involved in a course transformation project with other Texas State math faculty to revise the entire algebra sequence, spanning the developmental math level to the college math level, which suffers from poor student performance and retention. We are the ones who see our students struggles every day and we are the ones who help them overcome. Therefore, only we have the direct knowledge of what teaching practices do and do not work so only we are qualified to develop curriculum, not external administrators, as this bill would require.

Furthermore, this bill would hinder my ability to teach the mathematical principles underlying solutions to real world problems. I cannot teach stratified statistical sampling without discussing sex, ethnicity, and race and I cannot teach the formulas used to apportion US congressional districts without discussing politics.

This is bill is one of many brought forward in recent legislative sessions that create a general sense among some faculty members who I am personally familiar with that they are not welcome in the state of Texas. The senior lecturer who I learned to teach developmental math under while earning my Master’s degree has already retired, despite being a young man. I heard this from another colleague who also plans to leave the state as soon as his retirement is vested.

Faculty in higher education typically stay for long past the time they could retire because their field of study is their passion, and they steadily increase their expertise and contribution to the school where they teach and the body of knowledge their research builds upon, for their whole lives.

I myself am uncertain whether I will continue my education in Texas. I have reached the point in my life where I am ready to pursue doctoral studies. While I love San Marcos and would prefer to earn my Ph.D. from Texas State University, a rising R1 institution, where I started in 2004, I’m wary and considering other options. All this tells me a brain drain is already starting in Texas. Rejecting this bill would be good way to stop and reverse it.

Saundra Bovd, PhD

Retired from HCC representing MySelf

Houston, TX

I object to interference with the academic freedom of professors, as I believe they teach the truth and it is knowledge of truth that builds a truly great nation. I believe in knowing the truth of our history of racism, of understanding how our white privilege works to disadvantage any lacking enough Caucasian genes to pass. I believe in the greatness of the Declaration of Independence of the USA and it's Constitution's attempts to manifest those ideals. I firmly believe in reliving and honoring our history of Civil Rights actions and laws to make manifest the ideal of equity in America--the cornerstone of our greatness. Please do no vote for this horrible bill that undercuts all the ideals that made America Great. Please stop undermining our greatness at the whims of a President who has no interest in supporting our constitution, if he was even aware that's what he was vowing when being sworn in.

Norma Guzman, Dr.
Texas A&M University - Kingsville
San Antonio, TX

As an educator of over 20 years, I recognize how Texas thrives when educators are empowered to teach, question, and inspire. SB 37 threatens that freedom by imposing political control over curriculum and eroding shared governance—two foundational pillars of higher education. Protecting academic freedom and the integrity of higher education is essential to maintaining a vibrant learning environment that fosters critical thinking, inquiry, and intellectual growth.
SB 37 whitewashes curriculum and imposes heavy-handed oversight through a politically appointed committee, limiting qualified educator and faculty input and restricting academic discussions. By placing curriculum control under political appointees, this bill diminishes the expertise of educators and replaces it with directives that prioritize political agendas over evidence-based teaching. This approach stifles academic freedom, by striving to disempower faculty, and restrict discussions on critical topics that are integral to fostering higher-order thinking and preparing students to navigate complex societal challenges. I oppose SB37.
Moreover, SB 37 attempts to dismantles the long-standing tradition of shared governance, by over-reaching in the creating a unilateral decision-making process and placing authoritarian power with administrators and political appointees. Under this bill, faculty voices are muted in critical areas such as hiring, grievance processes, and curriculum development. This not only undermines the profession, and the qualification of educators/faculty but it also compromises the quality of education students in Texas institutions of higher learning receive. When faculty are stripped of their ability to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes, the educational mission of our institutions is at risk. Academic freedom is not a partisan issue—it is the backbone of quality higher education. I oppose SB37.
The bill would restrict research which would be able to be conducted without fear of retribution, and that students can engage with complex topics in a space that values open inquiry and critical analysis. SB 37, however, seeks to control what can and cannot be taught, creating a chilling effect on campuses across the state. This undermines the very purpose of higher education: to cultivate independent thinkers who can analyze, question, and engage with the world around them.
In a state that prides itself on academic excellence, research innovation, and student success, SB 37 is a step backward. We should be empowering our educators, centralizing power to administrators and politicians. We should be expanding academic freedom, not curbing it. We should be encouraging robust discussions, not restricting them.
For the sake of our students, our institutions, and the future of higher education in Texas, I strongly oppose SB 37.

Debarati Sen
Self
Houston, TX

This bill SB 37 as proposed will alter the great principle of academic freedom as exercised by all esteemed Texas universities. It will impair professors' ability to train students to think critically and become active members of our US Democracy and be responsible global citizens. This Bill SB 37 should be stopped from passing to save Texas higher ed.

William Wierda

Self, physician, academic healthcare researcher and provider

HOUSTON, TX

Dear Chair and Members,

I support transparency, accountability, and responsible use of taxpayer resources. As someone who has spent my career in academic medicine, I share your commitment to excellence, integrity, and meeting the healthcare needs of Texans.

However, I respectfully caution that Senate Bill 37—while well intentioned—may cause serious unintended harm to academic healthcare institutions, our workforce, and the people we serve.

First, patient care is at risk.

Texas is home to some of the top academic medical centers in the nation. These institutions train doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals who go on to serve rural, veteran, and underserved communities across the state. SB 37's mandate for top-down control over curriculum and governance risks discouraging or eliminating critical content in clinical education—topics like mental health, ethics, and health disparities—because they may be seen as politically sensitive.

Weakening the role of faculty in medical education compromises the preparedness of our future workforce and puts patient safety at risk. Allowing political overrides of academic content will make it harder to recruit and retain top physicians and educators who want to work in an environment where science, not politics, guides medicine.

Second, it threatens our institutions' national standing.

Texas is recognized for excellence in cancer care, research, and innovation. SB 37 may jeopardize this by raising concerns among accrediting bodies and federal research agencies about academic independence. Accreditation is not a formality—it is essential to educating students, conducting research, and securing NIH and federal funding that brings jobs and innovation to Texas.

The bill will also affect recruitment. Top students and faculty choose programs with strong academic freedom. If governance is politicized and faculty voices are diminished, top talent will go elsewhere.

Finally, the bill may damage Texas's reputation.

We all want Texas to lead—not only in energy but in science, medicine, and biotechnology. Companies investing in these sectors look for states that support stable academic environments and protect scientific credibility. SB 37 could be seen as government micromanagement and a rejection of shared governance—values upheld by high-performing institutions, including our nation's military academies.

Headlines about faculty departures, accreditation loss, or reduced federal funding will hurt not just universities, but Texas's ability to compete and lead.

In closing, I urge you to collaborate with educators and physicians to ensure SB 37 strengthens, rather than weakens, our academic healthcare institutions. Let's protect academic excellence, support future clinicians, and ensure Texas remains respected, competitive, and trusted—here and across the country.

Thank you.

William G. Wierda, MD, PhD

Submitted on behalf of myself as a private citizen and not on behalf of any group, organization, or institution.

Sarasij Majumder, Dr.

Self

Houston, TX

This bill will affect academic freedom, which is essential for training students in Texas and the United States, which are poised to be the world's most significant industrial hubs. It will also discourage students from applying to programs in Texas universities that may soon see a decline in their global rankings. This bill should not be passed.

Julie Weng
Self
Austin, TX

Please oppose any version of SB 37. The revised bill seeks to rid universities of courses in the core curriculum that do not offer "value" to the Texas workforce, however, the bill does not clearly delineate the metrics by which value is determined. Numerous courses, particularly those in the humanities, equip students skills that cannot be easily measured in terms of direct workforce application. I am concerned that such courses will be more vulnerable to elimination if the bill becomes law. In addition, I am concerned that this bill creates more bureaucracy for our universities, which already have vast checks and balances. Please help prevent needless bureaucracy by opposing this bill. Please trust university faculty to spearhead curriculum assessment and changes by opposing this bill. And please send a message to students and faculty that the Government of the State of Texas supports universities and learning in higher education by opposing this bill.

Amanda Masino, Dr.
SELF - Professor of Biology
Austin, TX

I am vehemently opposed to this bill. You will by now have been sent and/or heard detailed data-backed statements that describe the myriad ways that this bill will damage Texas higher education. It is ill-considered, poorly-crafted, rife with contradictions, and a waste of resources, including the resources being expended to even consider this ridiculous legislation. It is a bill crafted to make cheap ideological points against the imaginary specter of "liberal university culture" by purporting to solve problems that do not even exist. It will duplicate existing efforts, create massive inefficiencies and administrative burden, stifle innovation, chill external funding, and accelerate the brain drain that has Texas' most promising students and researchers looking anywhere but here. In a way, it is a sort of achievement to do so much damage with one bill. So, congratulations, I guess, to its supporters, for wielding such a vicious sledgehammer.

I am not completely dispirited, however. I still have hope that cooler heads will prevail, and your committee will come to its collective senses about how truly awful this bill will be for Texas colleges and universities. It would be ideal if you refuse to advance it altogether. But if not, I hope and pray that you use your good judgement to amend the bill to appropriately limit its damage. Again, you will by now have heard or received numerous well-informed opinions as to how to best do this.

Finally, I want to extend an invitation to any member of this committee who has doubts about the value of preserving academic freedom and shared governance to visit my university classroom. It is a sincere and open invitation. I teach Biology here in Austin. I strongly believe that if you spent some time with us - with the dedicated faculty and eager students working together to prepare our best and brightest for the challenges of the future - that the reality of who we are and what we do will dissipate the projected fears that fuel this kind of unwarranted legislative attack.

Respectfully,
Amanda M. Masino, Ph.D.
Professor of Biology

Paula McDermott
self/Higher Ed Professional
austin, TX

Please oppose this dangerous bill.

Susana Carranza, Dr.
self, retired engineer
Austin, TX

I am Dr. Susana Carranza, representing myself and I oppose all versions of SB 37.

I got my PhD in Chemical Engineering at UT Austin. One of the departments is focused on carbon capture to combat climate change. Are you going to stop that because you don't think climate change is real?

Are you going to defund development of solar cells and advanced batteries, because you favor fossil fuels? You might not know, but lithium batteries were pioneered by the late Dr Goodenough, an immigrant, nobel prize winner and long time UT Faculty who contributed to UT's greatness in the field.

Politicians and political appointees should not be dictating curriculum. That is not good for our universities, that is not good for democracy.

Don't destroy Texas' great universities by curbing academic freedom. I urge you to oppose this bill in all its versions.

Colleen Small
Self, Graduate Student
Manor, TX

I'm Colleen, a rising third-year PhD student at UT Austin. I'm here to oppose all versions of SB 37, and to ask you not to pass this legislation.

Before UT, I went to a small private Christian school, a baptist university, and an evangelical seminary. Not all my experiences during that time were in high-control groups, but some were. I recognize the logics in SB 37 after living under so many variations; they take me back to the centralized power at my K-12 school, to the girls' basketball coach who would become principal at that school, and to the moment I found out he's now scheduled to stand trial for twenty counts of second-degree sexual assault. His wife was convicted on three counts in October.

My UT experience departs sharply from my K–12 experience because an actual education empowers students to start asking questions about authority, indoctrination, and how treasured ideas form. I'm here to speak up for students who haven't had an opportunity to evaluate certain ideas, because they haven't learned those ideas: they've learned only discarded versions from people who rely on pre-formed judgments.

SB 37 contains these kinds of judgments. It warns my faculty not to teach supremacist beliefs around race, sex, ethnicity, or religious categories. But my faculty's work already disrupts the apparent stability of these categories—so they already comply with a law that would still subject them to vague political scrutiny. No wonder a professor I wanted to work with left UT because they feared exactly this kind of political overreach.

It is our faculty's job (and not the government's) to help us understand, navigate, and develop ideas. If an idea's not evidence-based, refuting it won't require political maneuvering. And intrusive political power won't help students notice the world around us and produce excellent scholarship.

My faculty have empowered and supported me. Now I'm asking you to support them—to be clear that our community is safer and stronger when you back our freedom to form our own conclusions instead of bowing to a political authority's.

Please don't pass SB 37.

JANIS REINKEN, Ms
SELF/ATTORNEY
Austin, TX

I strongly urge you to VOTE NO on SB 37/HB 4499. It does not offer ways to improve and encourage excellence of our college and university curriculum. Instead, it provides an administrative HAMMER to curtail, control and scrutinize courses for degree and certificate programs. This Bill misrepresents that it would establish an appointed Ombudsman office. The usual role of an Ombudsman is to serve as an independent problem solver to advocate for persons interacting with an institution, which in this case should be students, faculty, and administrators. Instead, this Bill would establish an iron-handed Auditor to serve as a WATCHDOG for the Governor and the Legislature to oversee our institutions of higher education and be sure they do not “step out of line.” The Bill creates an expensive Fiscal Note (over $3 Million the first biennium, and over $1.5 Million each year through 2030: see https://www.legis.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/fiscalnotes/pdf/SB00037E.pdf#navpanes=0 dated May 5, 2025). Of all things, this Bill authorizes the ATTORNEY GENERAL to act to impose PENALTIES to assure “compliance” by the institution, so that their funding would not be impaired by the Legislature. This is no way to foster first-rate college and university curriculum for our students. To the contrary, students and faculty will see how this discredits and diminishes the value of their education, so they will FLEE Texas, take their money and GO ELSEWHERE to obtain an outstanding education. VOTE NO on this Bill!

STEPHEN COTTEN, DR
Self / Professor
HOUSTON, TX

The existing draft of the bill limits compensation for participation on Faculty Senate. This should be clarified as it is already having several (I assume) unintended consequences at the university where I work.

For example, if a university were paying someone a $20,000 bonus to be on their Faculty Senate. I would (1) be very jealous, and (2) not object to stopping that.
But what if faculty are needed to serve on a committee over the summer, when they are generally off contract, to revamp core curriculum assessment for THECB? Normally faculty would receive a stipend since they are being asked for work outside of their normal scope of duties, but this is already being interpreted that because faculty service is part of shared governance, and this bill targets shared governance, then there could be no compensation.

Furthermore it is customary for faculty to receive workload adjustments. For example, a typical faculty member may teach 2 courses each term for 40% of their workload, conduct research for 40% of their workload, and perform service for the remaining 20%. An individual doing extra service - for example serving in a leadership role on a Faculty Senate - might be allocated 2 courses for 20%, their research for 40%, with service now making the remaining 40%. There is no change in their monetary compensation, but they are teaching two less courses to be able to perform the service. Is this considered compensation by the bill? My university is already assuming that it is.

If faculty are expected to do the same teaching and same research for no additional pay, regardless of how much service they do, then all (rational) faculty will choose to do the minimum amount of service. Given that the majority of our service is compliance with THECB, system policy, state law, and accreditation bodies, this will end badly. It will certainly accelerate administrative bloat as universities have to hire even more staff to replace the faculty work they getting.

Andrew Joseph Pegoda, Dr
Self, professor
Lake Jackson, TX

Greetings - I'm Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda. I am speaking as a private individual and per my First Amendment rights. My comments are mine alone.

I am a professor at a large R1 university in the state and have been for a long time. I have also gotten multiple undergraduate and graduate degrees from institutions of higher education in Texas. I have taught thousands of students and published over a hundred articles. Such would not be possible without the education I got from Texas institutions.

I am asking that you please DO NOT pass SB 37. It will destroy education in the state. It will drive scientists, scholars, lawyers, business, students, future workers, and others to seek options outside of Texas. Texas colleges have been great because of the freedom they have been afforded to create space for people in Texas to explore, discover, and create. Just as we want trained physicians determining the care children with cancer receive, we need disciplinary experts creating and shaping how their college courses function. It's also important that we be able to continuing covering the range of topics relevant to art, anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, biology, history, etc. Gender, race, disability, sexuality, class, etc. are all important. Employers want students who can think critically and who are aware of the identity variable that matter and that impact everyday life. Students are also eager to learn about these topics, as seen by the types of courses students sign up for. If certain topics or courses are prohibited, new free speech questions will emerge. And such courses encourage students to think critically and independently. Students sign-up for these semester-long classes (usually about 15 weeks) and walk away with new thoughts and ideas they have independently developed. Contrary to what some may hold, these courses are not about indoctrination, nothing even close to that.

As a member of a faculty senate, I have personally seen how important such bodies are (I recently helped lead a push to make the use of the SimpleSyllabus tool more inclusive for those with low vision) and how our roles are already very limited (we give recommendations to administration and help voice any concerns emerge).

I know the political and economic future of Texas is important and meaningful to the Texas House and Texas Senate.
To support a future that sees growth politically and economically, I again urge you to vote against HB 37. Much of what l see in SB 37 (and in the rhetoric surrounding it) seems to suggest wide-spread misconceptions about how colleges function. I'd urge you to take time to personally meet students and professors and to personally learn how colleges function in the everyday world. Just like we don't personally understand the work of voting for/against bills, I don't think most understand what professors do.

Please allow professors and colleges to continue functioning as they have for a long time.

Thank you for your time.

Stephen Russell, Dr.
self, university professor, member of Texas AAUP
Austin, TX

My name is Dr. Stephen Russell. I am speaking against all versions of SB 37. I am a public university professor and school director, but I am here speaking as a private citizen.
The language in this legislation comes from billionaire-funded conservative think-tanks that are pushing this radical agenda of dismantling and controlling universities – along with a whole range of other topics we are seeing this session. The point is that these ideas don’t come from regular Texans who care about having great universities.
Nearly 1.5 million college students attend public universities in Texas, and universities in Texas brought billions of dollars to the state. Texas has been a world leader in universities.
I grew up in Texas and was honored to become a university regents professor 10 years ago. Because of my research and leadership at UT and in the field, I collaborate and interact with people from all over the country and around the world. Everyone everywhere knows Texas and our universities. But that is dramatically changing, and this legislation will kill the reputations and standing of our universities.
This legislation will cause irreparable reputational harm to Texas universities – and the state of Texas. I have been at national and international meetings this spring, and everyone asks me – how can you stay in Texas? I personally know three leading faculty members who have already left UT Austin in recent months because of their concerns for academic freedom.
By dismantling shared governance – from limiting curriculum to hiring faculty – we will not be able to recruit and retain top talent in students, staff, and faculty to Texas.

Terra Rowe, Dr
self, university professor
Denton, TX

Dear committee,

As a proud supporter of our Texas public colleges, universities, and health institutions, I am reaching out to you with extreme concern about SB 37. This bill promotes big government and will strip our great institutions of their ability to be competitive on a national and global stage. Please vote against SB 37.

SB 37 is an undue Big-Government intrusion into public higher education. SB 37 doesn't just tweak policy—it's a sweeping power grab that replaces shared governance with political control. It replaces local decision-making by campus communities to a centralized board of political appointees. That's not academic reform—that's a hostile takeover.

Faculty are trained professionals with deep knowledge of their fields. Yet SB 37 would sideline them from curriculum development, hiring, and grievance processes. This undermines educational quality, innovation and research, and academic freedom.

Under SB 37, course content must now pass a political litmus test. Vague bans on how faculty and students can discuss "race, sex, or ethnicity, or social, political, or religious beliefs" threatens to chill speech, censor history, and strip Texas students of a complete, honest education. Faculty—not politicians—should determine what topics are covered in college classrooms and students should have the freedom to discuss topics.

Faculty Senates—democratically elected bodies that help institutions function—would become hollow representative bodies, run by the president and muzzled from speaking out. Grievance processes would exclude juries of one's peers and faculty from participating in other ways as well. This dismantles long-standing checks and balances in higher education.

If the legislature wants to shrink government, this bill does the exact opposite. The bill will create a massive bureaucracy to micromanage the curriculum for the1.4M students seeking degrees at 74 community colleges, 37 public universities, and 14 public health institutions. Right now, curriculum decisions are made by the president at each institution after lengthy deliberation and discussion among the students, staff, faculty, and administrators who provide advisory recommendations to the president.

SB 37 will drive away top faculty, researchers, and administrators who don't want their work micromanaged by the government. Texas has the most R1 and R2 research universities and health institutions in the nation. It's the faculty who win the external grants and graduate the doctoral students to achieve these designations. Professors teach courses to prepare students to conduct research. This bill puts that status—and our future workforce—at risk.

I want to make sure my position is clear: I am AGAINST this undue, Big-Government intrusion into higher education. I will be watching the vote you take in committee closely. Thank you for your consideration.

Caroline Faria
Austin
AUSTIN, TX

My name is Caroline Faria. I give testimony in my capacity as a private citizen. I am in my eleventh year teaching at the University of Texas at Austin in the Department of Geography and the Environment. I love my job. I am passionate about my research on innovative urban planning. I am active in conducting service on the graduate assembly and numerous college and university wide awards committees. I was associate director of the Plan II honors program for three years. And I am currently working with staff, faculty and students to prepare for our annual celebration of undergraduate research. Lastly, I love my role as a teacher - and the opportunity to work with smart and curious students.
I am very proud to work at UT Austin and I feel deeply committed to my students, colleagues and our institution. One of the things I appreciate most is the autonomy I have to exercise my now-twenty years of expertise. I will focus here on my work in service to students.
I teach large format introductory courses that serve thousands of students and I teach smaller upper-division and graduate classes, training future experts in my field. I greatly value the educational liberty to put my training to work in the classroom: to experiment and fine tune the balance and content of lectures, field trips, invited speakers, exam modalities and learning strategies. Through careful response to weekly student and end of semester evaluations, I ensure that students get the most for their tuition dollars. Students receive a rigorous and innovative educational experience that will foster vital lifelong skills in writing, thinking, and learning and ensure their competitiveness for top jobs. And I am effective. My students are excited and engaged in our classrooms, my CIS scores are consistently very high, and I have received numerous college and university wide teaching awards.
SB 37 would impose restrictions on what and how I teach that would fundamentally and negatively impact our students. It would add layers of bureaucratic management that would take time away from my work with and for students. And it would curtail one of the most important elements of innovation - that is, the freedom and autonomy I have to teach my students effectively. I see these controls reflected in elements of the bill that seek to build an expensive, time consuming nanny state for faculty self-administration, self-disciplinary procedures and faculty hiring decisions.
SB 37 undermines the quality of student education. In light of this kind of legislation, we are losing our most promising student and faculty talent. UCLA, Michigan, Oregon, Yale, Berkeley, Princeton and The Ohio State are just some of the institutions my colleagues, promising prospective graduate students, and honors undergraduates have moved to, or chosen over, UT Austin in just the last year. There is no doubt that SB 37 is a significant threat to the prestige, reputation and competitive edge of UT Austin and our partner institution

Devyn Vest
Self- Lone Star College & San Jacinto College
Kingwood, TX

The system put in place for higher education, while flawed, is better than this proposal. Faculty already have a hard enough time getting their feedback and responses acknowledged. Also, the hiring process of these institutions is already insane, with most requiring three total interviews and a ton of prep work. Now is not the time to tamper with higher education standards. We need more direct faculty support from within, not people making decisions who are unqualified and unequipped.

Christine Kovic
Self
Houston, TX

My name is Christine Kovic. I have been a professor for over 27 years and a citizen of Texas for most of life. I am speaking as a private citizen and am not representing any group or organization. I am against all versions of SB 37.
SB 37 would censure classroom discussions and limit the topics that could be discussed; it even limits the possibility of professors being able to respond to some of their student questions. The classroom is one of several unique spaces in our democratic society, where students regularly engage in open dialogue on myriad topics, expressing multiple points of view, and challenging one another and themselves to see the world in new ways. The students I have taught show extreme maturity in grappling with new ideas and controversial issues as they critically engage with texts. They respectfully challenge ideas and may disagree with me, or with each other, and often change their perspectives. Through open discussion, they gain skills in critical thinking, research, and writing, and apply these skills to contemporary social issues. This bill shows a profound lack of respect to students and teachers alike.
Curtailing what topics can be discussed and how they can be addressed would not only create a chilling effect but would create fear in the classroom. People could be silenced and courses cancelled if they don't endorse a mandated point of view. Allowing open discussion and multiple points of view is one of the cornerstones of a democracy. Texas public colleges and universities -- including our community colleges, teaching institutions, and research universities -- are some of the strongest in the country. If this bill is passed, the choices of majors and minors in our universities will be greatly limited. Professors will not want to come to work in the state. The long-term well-being and reputation of these institutions will decline greatly.
For this and many other reasons, please do not support SB 37, it would cause long lasting damage to education in Texas.

Russell Moses, PhD
Self (Professor of Instruction, Texas State University)
Austin, TX

Russell Moses, Austin, TX 78753, Rep. Talarico's District. Professor of Instruction at Texas State University. Speaking for myself in opposition to any and all versions of SB 37, the Higher Education Death Star Bil.

In a "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" jointly formulated nearly 60 years ago (1966-67) by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), Sec. 5 of that statement begins with the clear declaration that "The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process." The statement goes on to say that "On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty."

SB 37 in its many versions, sets out to systematically undermine longstanding national standards of college government and due process agreed upon for nearly sixty years by well-respected national bodies representing colleges, college boards, and college faculty. SB 37 will not "enhance the public image" of our state's reputation for standards of excellence in higher education; in fact, this bill will cause historical and lasting damage to the excellence that faculty have worked hard to build over the past century, diminishing the perceived value of college degrees awarded by Texas institutions of higher education for many years to come. If you value the future of higher education in Texas, you must oppose SB 37.

Jaya Davis, Dr.
Self, professor
Arlington, TX

I am opposed to SB 37 in its current form and the spirit under which it is written. Faculty employed by universities across the state have dedicated their professional careers to the education of students in their field of study. They work for the success of students, industry, and Texas communities. Freedom to develop curriculum that meets the needs of students, industry and supports community is vital to keep Texans competitive and fuel advances that come about through critical thinking and broad perspectives. Requiring review of curriculum and degree requirements by the state is a layer of bureaucracy that is anti-Texan. Further, Texas will continue to lose talent by restricting academic freedom both by reducing the desire for educators, researchers, and I dusted partners to come to a restricted environment, as well as our best students leaving for more supportive institutions. This bill is damaging to us all.

Wynne Chin, Dr.
self
Sugar Land, TX

Hello, I’m Dr. Wynne Chin and I’m a tenured professor in the Business School at the University of Houston. I’m speaking as an individual and not as a representative of UH. I’m currently on the board of the Texas Council of Faculty Senates and National Council of Faculty Senates. I’ve also served twice as the Faculty Senate President at UH (2008 and 2015).
I am speaking against all versions of SB 37 and would like to focus on how it has:

- Hurt recruiting and represents a potential brain drain for Texas universities, and will
- Hurt the efficiency and effectiveness of our current organizational processes and structure at UH.

Regarding recruiting, this bill is already being raised as a point of concern by faculty I am involved in hiring. Conversely, several top performing faculties at UH have told me they are seriously considering leaving Texas because of this bill. Personally, several universities have reached out to me to join their institution explicitly mentioning their awareness of this bill.
Concerning organizational process and structure, it’s better to view the Faculty Senate as the tactical layer of a pyramid model that connects the operational teaching and research activities of faculty with those strategic directions provided by the Board of Regents, Chancellor, Provost, and other senior administrators. Among Fortune 500 companies, organizational structures will always differ for reasons like size of the company, the specific market segment being served, etc. Similarly, the current structure for UH’s Senate with its 134 senators has and continues to evolve over time to fit the conditions of our unique market and goals. Reexamining our structure is mandated every 4 years. This bill will impose a particularly rigid structure for UH that is suboptimal for reasons such as:

- requiring people at the strategic level to be involved in operational activities,
- increase costs to replace senators that can no longer be involved due to size constraints
- not including non-tenured faculty in key roles that require their expertise

Overall, these and other reasons connected to proposed structural changes will lead to increased costs and less effectiveness.

Francisco Paz y Puente Arguelles
Self
Houston, TX

To policy makers.
My name is Francisco Arguelles. I am an educator and a U.S. citizen that has lived in Texas for more than 25 years and raised my son and daughter here. I am writing as an individual to express my strongest rejection to SB 37 as this bill will cause tremendous and long lasting damage to our state, our higher education system, our economy and our youth.
Regardless of its intentions, SB 37 will have a devastating impact on the credibility and competitiveness of our higher education system. SB 37 authors seem to be more concerned with political posturing and short term electoral gains than with strengthening and improving the quality of the education our youth receive. Over many decades of investment and hard work, our state has built an impressive and well respected higher education system; this bill will cause irreparable damage by imposing curriculum censorship worthy of the Middle Ages. The spirit behind these bills and other attacks on higher education have already been pushing top academic talent out of our State and will prevent high quality scholars from even thinking of coming to teach in our state.
By curtailing the freedom of teachers and students to engage in dialogue and critical analysis of different theories and concepts that try to understand society, history and humanity from a diversity of perspectives, SB 37 and its authors show an alarming lack of respect and trust in Texans and our capacity to think, discuss, disagree or agree and keep moving forward together to continue creating opportunities for the development of our youth. A real democracy and a healthy and strong society are not afraid of diversity and dialogue; SB 37 and its attack on shared governance, threats to give unqualified non-educators the power to shut down academic programs or imposing a politicized hiring processes and oversight show a dangerous ignorance of how a higher education system works and what makes it successful. The proposal of a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Office of the Ombudsman has echoes of a soviet style bureaucratic repression that would seriously affect the economic viability of our workforce in the XXI century.

I encourage our legislators not to give in to pressures or temptation for short term political wins that will seriously affect the quality of education our youth will receive and the opportunities they will have when they go out to the world to try to compete in the global economy in this age of information and knowledge. My two kids received a great education in the public school system from elementary school to High school in Texas and are now attending a public university where I hope their minds continue to be challenged and their choices respected, please, do not betray your principles, do not damage the future of our youth,
Don´t Mess With Texas' Education and Economic Future!
Sincerely,
Francisco Arguelles

Tanya Guthrie
Self / Retired
Austin, TX

I am against SB 37.

Tiffany Sams
Law Office of Tiffany Sams
Houston, TX

Higher education distinguishes itself by offering pathways for in-depth study and research across a spectrum of knowledge. To best serve this purpose, institutions of higher learning should be insulated from becoming political instruments, instead prioritizing the pursuit of individual learning choices. For state-funded universities to truly deliver on their educational promise, they require the independence to educate their students based on their institutional mission and values, ensuring that the quality of elective education isn't dictated by external political viewpoints.

Maria Unda, Dr.
n/a
Austin, TX

My name is Dr. María del Carmen Unda, and I am speaking today as a private citizen in strong opposition to SB37. I am a researcher at the University of Texas and a first-generation Indigenous scholar. My academic career has been devoted to studying and strengthening the Texas teacher workforce—examining how we recruit and retain educators, especially those who reflect the communities they serve.

I am currently on the academic job market, hoping to become a professor here in Texas—the state I've long called home. But Senate Bill 37 makes that future feel nearly impossible.

This bill directly targets the fields where I teach and conduct research—education, ethnic studies, social work, and the liberal arts. These are the disciplines that foster critical thinking, public service, and civic responsibility. They also happen to be the very fields most often taught by women, first-generation scholars, and people of color.

SB37 would strip hiring power from faculty with subject expertise and transfer it to political appointees. This is not about neutrality—it's about control. As Indigenous feminists remind us, attempts to control knowledge are attempts to control people. SB37 is a modern form of intellectual colonization.

Let's be honest about where this bill comes from. SB37 was not written by educators or Texas students. It was crafted by out-of-state, billionaire-funded think tanks pushing a national political agenda. It's part of a coordinated effort to censor classrooms, silence critical inquiry, and dismantle public institutions—one policy at a time.

This is not a Texas-grown solution. This is an outside assault on our state's higher education system. And if passed, it will destabilize our universities, drive away talented faculty, and undermine the quality of education we provide to students across this state.

I want to stay in Texas. I want to teach future teachers, lead research that supports our schools, and serve students whose families—like mine—have called this land home for generations. But SB37 turns the classroom into a space of surveillance rather than learning.

This bill promotes censorship, imposes prior restraint on academic speech, and violates the basic tenets of educational freedom. Curriculum decisions should be made by those with content expertise, not subjected to political litmus tests.

I urge you to reject SB37. Protect the freedom to teach, to think, and to serve Texas students with integrity and truth.

Thank you.

Dr. Maria Del Carmen Unda | drmariaunda@gmail.com
Education Scholar, and Community Educator at SBOE District 5
Ph.D., Educational Leadership and Policy, The University of Texas at Austin
M.Ed., Education Policy & Planning, The University of Texas at Austin
B.A., Chicana/o Studies & Education Studies, University of California Los Angeles
Gates Millennium Scholar 2012 – 2023

Joy Davis
Self
Houston, TX

Universities are where students are able to dive deeper about their learning experiences of the world outside of what was taught throughout their k-12 education. Universities have degree programs that have been in place for years. Faculty members shouldn't be penalized for teaching history. This bill restricts academic freedom.

Ravi Prakash, Dr.
Self -Professor
Dallas, TX

Testimony Against SB 37: I am speaking in my personal capacity as a private citizen and a resident of the great state of Texas, and my statements are in not on behalf of my employer, nor are they representative of the position of my employer. I would like to express my opposition to all versions of SB 37 on the following issues:

1. Faculty bring their domain expertise in determining the curriculum appropriate for students. Texas, with the largest number of R1 universities, is able to attract experts from all over the world to teach at its universities. Taking away the ability of such experts to determine the curriculum will make it harder for Texas universities to continue to attract the best talent from all over the world. In fact, the kinds of restrictions mentioned in SB 37 on faculty related to curriculum could result in departure of such experts from Texas universities to universities in other states or abroad.

2. Faculty senates play an important advisory role to Presidents. For faculty senates to continue to play such a role it is important that these bodies be representative of the faculty, and their composition determined solely by faculty. To have some of the faculty senators and all the faculty senate leaders picked by the President will reduce faculty senate to a body that simply echoes the opinions of the President, rather than provide genuine advice to the President. Most Presidents never teach a class, and hardly come in contact with faculty and students on a daily basis. Currently, faculty senates play an important role in helping university Presidents understand the concerns of faculty and students who are in their classes. As an analogy, when Texas Senate or House holds public hearings about proposed bills, all concerned citizens have an opportunity to speak, not a group where speakers were hand-picked by the distinguished Texas Senator or Representative chairing the committee. The bills are better because of it. So, why deprive university Presidents of similar, unvarnished input from faculty?

Finally, as the parent of a current undergraduate student at UT Austin, and a high school junior getting ready to go to college, I want curriculum to be determined by domain experts, and not by some bureaucrat or a political ideologue intent on pushing his/her agenda. If control over curriculum is taken away from faculty, I will seriously consider sending my child to a university outside Texas. As you know, students tend to settle in cities/states where they went to college. So, SB 37 will cause migration of skilled talent out of Texas.

Carrie King
self
Austin, TX

This constant barrage of attempts to infringe on our society’s safe spaces for free thinking and exchange of knowledge is reprehensible and must stop. This Bill falls under the anti-democratic umbrella of thought that we should all adopt a white, straight, Christian ideology. The ideas presented in this Bill reject everything the founders of our Constitution intended and free thinking citizens won’t stand for it. Universities provide all-encompassing knowledge, and the public institutions are Hands Off. Private universities can narrow their focus as much as they’d like, but public universities are just that- for the public, for all. Disagreement and dialogue are tenets of a healthy democracy, and universities have a legacy of providing a safe space for this crucial dynamic. Please vote this Bill down to preserve our way of life through the continued support of diverse thinking on university campuses across this state.

Barbara Anderson
self, retired educator
Austin, TX

This is ridiculous. Political appointees do not have the knowledge or expertise to make unilateral decisions regarding higher education curriculum, degree programs, nor hiring of staff. Any democracy needs an educated populace. Higher Education should include inquiry, critical thinking, and exposure to a variety of races/ethnicities/religions/politics/beliefs. Any political appointee will strive to advance the narrow agenda of whomever appoints him/her. VOTE NO!

Nisha Abraham
Self
Austin, TX

As a proud supporter of our Texas public colleges, universities, and health institutions, I am reaching out to you with extreme concern about SB 37. This bill promotes big government and will strip our great institutions of their ability to be competitive on a national and global stage. Please vote against SB 37 if/when it is put up in committee.

SB 37 is an undue Big-Government intrusion into public higher education. SB 37 doesn't just tweak policy—it's a sweeping power grab that replaces shared governance with political control. It replaces local decision-making by campus communities to a centralized board of political appointees. That's not academic reform—that's a hostile takeover.

Faculty are trained professionals with deep knowledge of their fields. Yet SB 37 would sideline them from curriculum development, hiring, and grievance processes. This undermines educational quality, innovation and research, and academic freedom.

Under SB 37, course content must now pass a political litmus test. Vague bans on how faculty and students can discuss "race, sex, or ethnicity, or social, political, or religious beliefs" threatens to chill speech, censor history, and strip Texas students of a complete, honest education. Faculty—not politicians—should determine what topics are covered in college classrooms and students should have the freedom to discuss topics.

Faculty Senates—democratically elected bodies that help institutions function—would become hollow representative bodies, run by the president and muzzled from speaking out. Grievance processes would exclude juries of one's peers and faculty from participating in other ways as well. This dismantles long-standing checks and balances in higher education.

If the legislature wants to shrink government, this bill does the exact opposite. The bill will create a massive bureaucracy to micromanage the curriculum for the1.4M students seeking degrees at 74 community colleges, 37 public universities, and 14 public health institutions. Right now, curriculum decisions are made by the president at each institution after lengthy deliberation and discussion among the students, staff, faculty, and administrators who provide advisory recommendations to the president.

SB 37 will drive away top faculty, researchers, and administrators who don't want their work micromanaged by the government. Texas has the most R1 and R2 research universities and health institutions in the nation. It's the faculty who win the external grants and graduate the doctoral students to achieve these designations. Professors teach courses to prepare students to conduct research. This bill puts that status—and our future workforce—at risk.

I want to make sure my position is clear: I am AGAINST this undue, Big-Government intrusion into higher education. I will be watching the vote you take in committee closely. Thank you for your consideration.

Stephanie Landgraf
self - business development manager
Austin, TX

I urge all to vote to oppose this bill, which would give the state unprecedented governance over the curriculum and degree programs of state universities. This is government interference where it should not be, and I oppose that entirely. All must vote in opposition to this bill. Thank you.

Carmela Walker
Urban League of Texas
Houston, TX

SB 37 is diluting our educational foundation with heavy handed oversight that cannot be substantiated. The lack of data to codify changes required under the bill, the need to position the Governor, Lt. Governor, Board of Regents as the final decision makers to assess class curriculums, and the educational aptitude to make equitable decisions for our teachers/students is bottlenecking process to support our future workforce. It is a duplication of efforts shadowing the K-12 model and quite frankly, disastrous to our educational structure.

It is an aggressive stance and fiscally irresponsible to task our institutions who are doing their best to produce scholars who must be critically thinking change agents to operate with dignity and equity. This bill will intentionally cut out access and introduce unnecessary barriers into a process where the treat of privatization will further marginalization.
Introducing methods of indoctrination neither teaches our children responsible leadership, nor does it teach our children deductive reasoning to question the violation of their civil rights. This bill is not true representation of due process in education but another punitive method of standardized marginalization, suppressing the expression of opinion to violate the First Amendment of the Constitution AND the Texas Constitution, Article I.
This bill will ruin our educational position where Texas ranks 30th on a national scale. Therefore, the gravity of oversight required under this bill is lowering our educational standard set to reinforce historical discriminatory practices reinforcing greater stereotypes. The lack of creativity will leave social ecosystems vulnerable and create critical implications that will intensify risks for all students, leaving them vulnerable to authoritarian shortfalls within private and public sectors.
It is imperative that we work harder to eliminate biases and inequities where occurrences through education, sports activities, hiring practices, employment, contractual needs, etc., will succumb to disproportionate determinants if this bill is not left pending!
Based upon workforce changes this bill justifies the need to suppress freedom of expression by expanding disparities through discriminatory policy changes – top down, no questions asked regime. It is the duty of our legislature to reinforce checks and balances while implementing safeguards to protect professors, students - freedom of expression, human rights, rule of law, across all socio-economic platforms while diminishing disproportionate representation within cross-sector industries.
The ULoT asks committee members to leave this bill pending indefinitely in committee!

Allison Thompson
Self
Pflugerville, TX

My name is Allison Thompson and I live in Pflugerville, TX. I am a graduate from and a retiree of The University of Texas at Austin where I had the privilege of working with folks from many areas of study. My work was in telecommunications - I am proud to say that our office worked closely with all the institutions of higher education within the UT System as well as within the Texas A&M System to deliver the best wide area telecommunications backbone network that we were able to provide. This work also brought us in contact with faculty, staff and students in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at UT Austin. The raw talent and brain power that was attracted globally by this outstanding department brought many innovations to our wide area network as well as brought many industry leaders to our state. I write in opposition to SB 37. This bill would stifle the ability of our higher education institutions to attract the best and brightest from around the world and would, indeed, compromise higher education's ability to create course work and materials for the students that we also want to attract to our state and to our economy. The elected officials in our state are not subject matter experts and have no business interfering in hiring decisions, faculty self-governing bodies, and curriculum. I am frankly appalled that educated folks such as yourselves would even consider that you have the expertise in business, sciences, engineering, the arts, the liberal arts and all other areas of study to dictate to our fine institutions of higher education what and how material should be taught. If you pass this bill and it becomes law, you will take this state backwards by decades. We will not be able to attract the best brains from around the world and we will cease to be the center of innovation and discovery. Innovation and discovery are the key elements to attract economic growth to our state! Please, I urge you to vote against this bill. We are a state that needs to be moving forward to solve the critical issues of our time. Do not put shackles on higher education.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison B. Thompson

AJ Juraska
Self, Seminarian
Austin, TX

I am a seminary student living in Austin. HB 37 is harmful because it prevents free thinking and independence of universities.

I have benefitted greatly from my education at a liberal arts college, an Ivy league university for my first master's degree, and now at a seminary. I have appreciated learning different perspectives, including those that lift up the voices of marginalized groups in programs like American Studies during my college education and even in theology in seminary. In college I took a class on American Masculinities, which studied men. It didn't preference men over others, just like a class on Black and African American Studies doesn't preference Black people over others. It merely is an opportunity to study how a group has been affected by different parts of history and social structures.

I'm a stronger person for having learned about different groups of people. This bill would hold students back because it would prevent them from learning about specific groups merely because of the perception that it preferences one group over another. Just because a course exists to celebrate the contributions of one group, and raises the struggles of that group, doesn't mean that the course is preferencing that group over and above another.

Jesus focused on the most marginalized, and this bill is written to prevent those who are most marginalized from being supported by universities. I believe we share the value of love. The best way to spread love is to make sure that we can be exposed to different ideas.

If we are made in God's image and we are fearfully and wonderfully made, shouldn't that include all our permutations? And shouldn't our schools support the beautiful diversity of humanity?

I urge you to vote against this bill.

Noland Martin, Dr.
Representing Self (Occupation: Professor of Biology - Texas State University / COSE Faculty Senator)
Wimberley, TX

My name is Noland Martin, and I am representing myself.

I am a professor at Texas State University in the Department of Biology. I am also an elected Faculty Senator representing the College of Science of Engineering. I provide this information only to give personal context (and the online form specifically says, "please enter "self" and your occupation). The views are my own as a Texas constituent and do not represent my colleagues, my department, my college, or my university.

I am writing to express my opposition of all versions of Senate Bill 37 (the original bill, as well as any committee substitute). Much of the bill, on the surface at least, appears to be attempting to fix problems that largely do not exist (as the vice chair stated in the first half of the meeting). Concerns expressed about faculty senates appear overblown and over-reaching. My personal experience as a faculty senator leads me to believe that these advisory bodies are critical - for both faculty and administrators - as they allow for a platform for college or university-wide issues (Faculty Senates are not the place for individual "grievances." There are policies - and an office of the ombudsman for those individual grievances) to be discussed in an open forum. Administrators value the input, and individual faculty members have a place where they can feel "heard." This is a win-win situation for all members of the university community, and I would urge the members of the Higher Education Committee to strike any language from any version of this bill that specifically targets faculty senates.
Thank you for providing this forum for committee input.

Noland Martin, PhD

Mona Mehdy
self, professor
Austin, TX

I am writing you as a private citizen, not representing any institution. I am a biology professor at the University of Texas at Austin for over 30 years. I oppose SB 37 in all its forms.

This bill is appallingly destructive in its breadth affecting public colleges and universities including health care institutions. It breaks down valuable norms, common across the country, well-functioning mechanisms of advisory input and decision making that already give extensive oversight, and replaces them with costly, bureaucratic, political controls that will drive down our service to Texas and our ability to attract students, faculty, and administrators. It will be a grave mistake to ignore the on the ground expertise, hard work by local faculty and administrators.

The bill seeks to control curriculum from faculty expert in their disciplines to far removed political appointees and administrators. It has broad language that will chill and damage freedom of speech, a bedrock needed for educating students and integrating research and education.

Our science and technology students need to have oral and written communication skills that are gained both in their courses of our discipline and courses outside of our discipline in the humanities and other subjects. These are vital exchanges for students and faculty.
I deeply urge a no vote on SB 37.

Reed Bilz, Ms
Self
Fort Worth, TX

I am writing to ask you to OPPOSE SB 37.
This bill, alleging to end “ideological bias” in higher education, would amount to a damaging takeover of public institutions, with nationwide implications.

Passage of SB 37 would essentially be a takeover of the state’s 126 public universities, community college districts and medical schools, with state officials even allowed to overturn hiring decisions. It could damage the institutions’ reputations and lead to a faculty brain drain.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 37.

Sabrina Ball
self
Fort Worth, TX

MORE big government overreach and it seems to be a limit on Texas students' potential. I want our students to have access to all ideas and I do not trust Texas legislators to act appropriately. They clearly have a motive to indoctrinate students with their personal ideologies. I want our public universities to be as close to private universities as possible and this NEVER would be considered on a private university. People will not come here and we will no longer be the 8th largest economy. Texas will die a slow death. We are already more stupid because of bills like these.

Lauren Brentnell, Dr.
self, assistant professor of instruction
Pflugerville, TX

I have been a professor of writing for over a decade and I write to oppose this legislation from that capacity. I am not originally from Texas, but I came here for a job at a university here because the university is one of the best, and I have not regretted this choice at all. However, legislation like SB 37 frightens me. It will result in damage to the reputation and research that comes out of our excellent Texas universities.

The best people to hire employees for any job are those who understand what that job requires. This has been a principle for American universities, who recognize the need for American excellence in research among the world stage, and recognize that means recruiting the best talent in the world. Experts draw in other experts--just as I was brought to Texas because I read work by professors from these universities and knew that my own research would be made better in conversation with them. It is essential for academics to be independent of politics--this allows research of all kinds to be advanced, and not only research that toes one political viewpoint.

In addition, a university education also requires a well-rounded education, just as a K-12 education does. The world recognizes the need to learn across subjects like math, science, writing--creating an avenue to get rid of certain degree and certificate programs based on hiring only means that people in programs that remain will no longer have all the knowledge that they need. As a writing teacher, I teach college writing courses that help students understand good writing beyond the university. Most of my students don't plan to be writers, but they recognize that the fields they do aim for require the kind of professional writing I teach. These programs need to remain to allow all students access to information across all disciplines.

Sarah Evascu
Self, homeschool parent
Austin, TX

I oppose all versions of SB 37. The bill is legislative overreach targeting esteemed institutions that already have multiple and functional layers of oversight, governance procedures, grievance procedures, curriculum and course review procedures, and prior passed anti-DEI restrictions. This bill's additional and broad restrictions to the teaching of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, social, and political beliefs will impede and narrow learning, discussion, debate, and critical thinking development. Texas students are more than capable of existing and thriving in complex learning environments. Further, there is no validated method to operationalize the credential and degree review process and ROI, or assign value ratings, in a rapidly changing and sometimes challenging economy, where individuals change careers, where fields and jobs are constantly emerging. Codifying threats to close entire degree programs, or departments, based on subjective, ill-defined value ratings is a terrible idea. This bill grants a random governing board, with no individual board member requirements for related educational or other expertise, the authority to overturn hiring decisions, approve or deny faculty postings in targeted fields, and approve or deny higher level administrative hiring decisions. Overall, the bill legislates political overreach and intrusion into a system that has been working well, with nationally highly ranked and respected institutions. SB 37 will drive the best student, faculty, and staff talent out of Texas higher education.

Samuel Trevino
Self
Austin, TX

SB 37 promotes big, wasteful government in community colleges, universities, and health institutions. SB 37 duplicates what these institutions already do.
Students should have freedom to choose what to study. SB 37 infantilizes students and assumes they’re incapable of forming their own conclusions on course topics. A topic can be analyzed from all viewpoints. Removing a topic prevents that.
Faculty, staff, administration, and students working collectively ensures community colleges, universities, and health institutions remain competitive. This freedom has allowed the faculty to win the grants and graduate doctoral students for Texas to have more top-tier research universities of any state. SB 37 sidelines faculty.
As experts in their fields and teaching, faculty are best positioned to develop the content for their courses. SB 37 sidelines faculty in favor of Governor appointees who are not experts. Could you imagine a Governor appointee telling nursing students how to treat patients? I encourage you to vote against this absurd, overreaching, and indeed redundant and pointless bill. Vote NO on SB 37.

Pamela Laflin
Positive Advocates for Voter Engagement
Houston, TX

I oppose SB37. Our Texas colleges and universities are great because of their continuing innovation and relevance, supporting growth for our community and economy. Imposing governor- or government-appointed supervision on classes and curriculum cannot help but hamstring a prosperous future that we could have had. Vote "NO" for SB37. Respectfully.

Aimee Villarreal, Dr
Self, anthropology professor
Converse, TX

I write to you as a private citizen, mother of a high school senior, and professor of anthropology with over twenty years of experience in higher education. I am writing to oppose SB 37. I often ask my most talented students why they chose to attend college in Texas. Many say they had family members who attended UT, Texas Tech, Texas State, or Texas A&M. These flagship institutions have a unique identity and living legacy in Texas that extends across generations. In anthropology, we call this cultural heritage. Texas university alumni form the backbone of the university's identity and funding structure showing that cultural heritage matters. It is not stagnant or ideological but flexible and adaptive to the needs of everyday Texans. Our legacy and first-generation graduates put value into Texas universities and add value to the state's economy in a reciprocal fashion. The growth of this legacy and alumni base is in the hands of faculty members and campus communities whose interactions and collaborations with students make the university a robust place for exploration.
SB 37 proposes a top-down governance structure that aims to disrupt the chain of command institutions of higher education. It also aims to censor curricula (created and vetted by scholarly experts) and usurp the important advisory and mentorship roles of faculty. Faculty support the legacy structure that generates enthusiastic alumni who donate, attend sporting events, and continue sending their children to their beloved alma mater. SB 37 flattens the unique identities of Texas universities, making them into drab, standard-issue degree mills ruled by ideologues with scant knowledge of how they operate. This bill does nothing to make higher education more affordable nor does it add any value to the degree programs students choose.
My daughter Myrah is in the top 5% of her class. She graduated from high school at 16. Her father and grandparents graduated from Texas Tech and she should be part of this grand lineage. Because of recent attacks on higher education in Texas, Myrah is taking a different path. She will attend the University of New Mexico in the fall because she sees the light of Texas universities dimming along with the value they offer to our most talented and promising young people. Myrah wants to be at an autonomous, thriving, and innovative university, not one perpetually in receivership.
Cultural heritage matters and legacy is valuable. SB 37 threatens the traditions that make Texas universities great—their independence.

John Mckiernan-Gonzalez
Self: Teacher. scholar
Austin, TX

My name is John Mckiernan-Gonzalez, and I am a faculty member in the history department at Texas State University, but I do not speak on behalf of my employer. Rather, I speak for Texas. I often teach about 150 yards away from where that great Texan signed the 1965 Higher Education Act, transforming colleges, universities and even tier 1 schools into engines of social mobility, economic engines in rural, urban and suburban regions, and one of the top destinations for international students across the world. Literally, we are what makes America great.

Between you and me, higher education in Texas is one of the envies of the world, from endowments, diverse student bodies, veteran support, first gen presence and world-class research and culture. It is so because in Blanche DuBois words' 'we have always relied on the kindness of strangers."

Our scholarship is reviewed by our colleagues, our peers in the disciplines, outside reviewers, editorial advisory boards, grant panels, grant committees, college councils, deans. Our teaching is reviewed by our students, our peers, our friends, our colleagues, everyone. All of this mostly unpaid, and definitely unrewarded – but we do it out of love and respect – the kindness of strangers.
At Texas state, we are nearing 45,000 students (20,000 more than since I started working here) because families, veterans and single independent adults believe in the promise of higher education, that classes are taught by people who participate in their academic discipline, participate in the academic community, publish and participate in conferences, and raise money to build the human and material infrastructure to keep research in the arts, humanities and sciences going.

Some of the provisions are emblematic of incredible bad faith with the cultures that create stellar research and teaching. No one wants to take a class wondering if one political appointee determined the class content. No one wants to try to recruit a colleague, knowing one person down the line might decide against the colleague the department chose to spend the next 30 years with. No one wants their promotions to depend on the whims of one person appointed by an unvetted representative of the legislature, yet another layer of review – politicized this time – with far more power than any other layer that has been built painstakingly over the last 125 years for Texas state, and the last 70 for the Higher Education Act. Be like Blanche, trust in others.

Do not be the legislators who put the wrench in the works that made Texas higher ed NOT the envy of the world.

Samia Arni
Self, Texas Ex
Austin, TX

I am writing to oppose SB 37, a bill which will highly decrease the value and quality of our education. As a graduate with a liberal arts degree as one of my majors, I see the value of the holistic perspective I was given and taught every day in my career path. I work towards supporting infrastructure projects affecting millions across Central Texas. I highly credit the education I received at my public institution for developing the skills that I use daily, including communicating to the public, analyzing written documents, and understanding complex technical problems.
I greatly appreciate the variety of courses offered at UT, the public institution I graduated from, and though I graduated from a relatively smaller program, it set me on the path that I'm on today and allows me to support Texas in becoming a prosperous state that can sustain the immense growth and challenges it's faced in the past decades.
Texas needs a variety of skills and research to ensure that the economy continues to prosper. By passing this bill, you would be actively hindering progress by preventing students from developing the necessary skills to succeed in the workforce.
Furthermore, this bill would do irreparable damage to faculty retention by increasing control over their classrooms and reducing degree programs. This brain drain and treatment of faculty will greatly prevent professors and faculty from wanting to teach at universities in the state, and will reduce the global prestige UT and other state universities have as public research institutions. This will also greatly impact the amount of companies who come to Texas to recruit students.
To truly support economic development in the state, we need to ensure that our educational institutions remain strong and that students and faculty can study and teach their subjects of expertise. By increasing control of university curriculums, you will be actively limiting the learning process. I urge you all to please vote against this bill to prevent the irreparable damage of our premiere public institutions and the academic environment which draws the finest professionals to our state. Thank you.

Holly Genovese
UT Austin
Austin, TX

My name is Holly Genovese and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies and have taught across the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. I am writing today as a private citizen opposed to the entirety of SB 37.

Several years ago I chose to move across the country to attend one of the top American Studies programs in the nation, at the University of Texas at Austin. I am not sure I would make the same decision today, a sentiment mirrored by many instructors and colleagues across the University. Texas is well known for the strength of its universities, the “public ivy” status of The University of Texas at Austin, and the nearly 1.5 million college students across the state. This bill threatens Texas’ reputation as a leader in higher education, as well as the ability to recruit faculty and students from across the country, which brings billions of dollars and brilliant minds to the state each year.

I am concerned that this bill will devalue our program and others like it, as well as the institution itself, because of the assumption that students cannot make decisions for themselves and that faculty somehow have unchecked power in the classroom. The goal of the humanities has always been to encourage students to think critically, to develop the tools to make their own arguments, and to introduce them to ideas, texts, and other sources that they may not otherwise encounter. Sometimes these ideas are controversial, but we instill in students the confidence to make their own decisions, both in and outside of the classroom. This bill limits our ability to do this. Specifically, the language that requires instructors "do not require or attempt to require a student to adopt a belief that any race, sex, or ethnicity or social, political, or religious belief is inherently superior to any other race, sex, or ethnicity or social, political, or religious belief, or to adopt any other similar ideology" greatly misinterprets what happens in the classroom. We do not, and never have, taught that “any race, sex, or ethnicity or social, political, or religious belief is inherently superior” but instead introduce students to beliefs and ideas that are different from their own. That said, the non-specificity of this language could allow teachers of controversial material, who only seek to enable students to make their own informed choices, targets of state oversight. If the goal of those in power is to enable students to make their own choices about their education and to avoid indoctrination, this bill actually prevents that.

If this bill is enacted, it will show a lack of trust in educators, a lack of faith in young Texans and other students from across the country, and devalue the system of Higher Education that has made me so proud to adopt Texas as a home state over the last several years. Please trust Texas educators and Texas students and vote no on SB 37.

Matthew Kanenberg
Self - Engineer
Houston, TX

My name is Matthew Kanenberg and I am an engineer who works in the oil and gas industry. I write to share my opposition to SB37. As someone who has worked in the oil and gas industry for almost three decades, From the refinery to the corporate office, I have had the opportunity to work with many talented individuals trained in a wide variety of disciplines. In reviewing SB37 I have serious concerns about how these reforms would impact our institutions of higher education in the state. It is imperative that college graduates be trained by talented and innovative faculty, this is what helps to push students to learn the most complex of ideas and concepts. In addition, our industries in the state of Texas benefit by having students who are able to work with diverse groups of people, trained in multiple disciplines, and who have different perspectives; this is what leads to solid critical thinking and strong problem-solving abilities.

I have worked to hire several recent college graduates in the past several years and I can tell you that we need college graduates who have diversity of thought and opinion; this is what facilitates our ability to innovate, create, and foster rich dialogue. All of this comes from institutions of higher education where curriculum is determined by faculty who are experts in their fields, not by government appointees who have no training in pedagogy or curriculum. The state of Texas has far more real issues to consider than the values-driven policy that is SB37 which will certainly hurt the quality of education in Texas and ultimately our future workforce. This bill amounts to unnecessary bloating of government and invasive government oversight of higher education. SB37 has no business becoming law in Texas.

Thank you,
Matthew Kanenberg
Houston, TX 77044

Alfonso Ayala III
Self
Austin, TX

I am writing today as a private citizen speaking against SB 37. I am a doctoral student at UT Austin who just completed my first year of studies. As a native to Texas who moved away and came back for doctoral studies, I was incredibly excited when I received an offer of admissions into one of the top public universities last year. In the past year, however, I have witnessed repeated attempts by the legislative body to seize control away fom univsities in ways that would severely impact their ability to create opportunities for students to get a well-rounded world-class education. University faculty are experts in their fields for a reason. I fail to understand the logic of suggesting that a panel of bureacraticly appointed officials, removed from what takes place in the day-to-day of a university's campus and lacking direct experience in working with students or within academic disciplinese, can make better decisions around curriculum and university governance than the faculty who are intimately involved in the university's business. As a student, I am concerned about the impacts this would have on the university's ability to attract top faculty, which then impacts the recruitment of outstanding graduate students. The reputation of UT is what it is today because of its history as a leader in academic thought. This bill would impact professor's ability to ensure diverse academic thought out of fear of retaliation for teaching content that is at odds with specific ideological positions. This legislation would lead to censorship of thought and a re-writing of the truth. And it is impossible for critical thinking to exist under censorship. As Representative Perez articulated during this hearing, the broad language of this bill means that the newly created statewide committee would be given unchecked discretionary powers given to bureaucrats to decide when it would be necessary to intercede on decisions related to curriculum and hiring. Any legislation that shifts power away from faculty and the university and into the hands of appointed bureaucrats is problematic and is a bad move for the future of higher education in Texas.

Henry Stuckey
Self, student at The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

My name is Henry Stuckey. I am an undergraduate student at The University of Texas at Austin. I am working towards two bachelor’s degrees, one in Civil Engineering, and one in Plan II Honors Liberal Arts. In addition, I am in the Jefferson Scholars program, through which I will earn a certificate in Core Texts and Ideas.

The Jefferson Scholars program is a “challenging, six-course integrated sequence in the great books and ideas of the ancient, medieval, and modern worlds”. [1] Through the Jefferson Scholars program, I have taken courses on Shakespeare’s plays, great works of ancient Greek literature, fundamental principles in the US Constitution, and the Bible. The free discussion between students and professors in the Jefferson Scholars courses have challenged me to think more deeply about the American tradition and how classical Western philosophies continue to shape the modern world.

SB 37 threatens discussion-based classes by pressuring professors to self-censor their courses, denying future students the ability to freely learn from highly knowledgeable experts. SB 37 also threatens the Jefferson Scholars program because SB 37 promotes consolidating or eliminating programs with lower enrollment, despite the fact that small class sizes are key to promoting lively classroom discussions. Consolidating or eliminating programs like Jefferson Scholars would deny future students the wonderful opportunities I have had to discuss the great books and ideas with interested students and knowledgeable professors.

For all these reasons, I oppose any form of SB 37, and I am hopeful that it will not pass.

[1] https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/coretexts/jefferson-scholars/

Mónica Jiménez, Dr
Self
Austin, TX

This bill will impose unnecessary and burdensome oversight over Texas institutions of higher education while not fixing any identified problems. It will impose undue burden in hiring and in daily university functions, also while not offering solutions to an identifiable problem. Most concerning of all is the undue restraint on speech that the bill seeks to impose on faculty who teach subjects that are currently unpopular with the political right. This bill seeks to limit what can be taught and thus what can be known. As a historian this is a very dangerous precedent, indeed. Students and citizens in Texas have a right to learn freely, unencumbered by political agendas. I speak as a student of Texas public K-12 schools, as well as a graduate of Texas higher education institutions. Texas' universities are among the best in the nation, precisely because thye teach students how to interrogate and understand the complicated nature of history, law, politics, governance and the world in which we live. This bill will hinder that excellence and do nothing to further an informed and productive Texas citizenry.

Diane Olmos-Guzman
LULAC Council 22503
Houston, TX

This needs to stop! Texas SB 37 will infringe upon our First Amendment rights and will send a “chilling effect” into college classrooms.
SB 37 is mimicking Florida’s Stop Woke Act that jeopardized academic freedom and freedom of speech. We The People urge Texas Legislators to protect our US Constitutional First Amendment Rights and Vote NO to Texas SB 37.

Wanda Hernandez, Dr.
Self, Educator
Austin, TX

My name is Wanda Hernández, Ph.D. I am a public university professor, but I speak as a private citizen. I am not speaking on behalf of my university. I vehemently oppose SB 37. This unjust bill limits the abilities of faculty to govern themselves and participate equitably in university life. Moreover, as an educator in the classroom, I am very concerned with the ways the bill will impact students ability to think critically. In my classes, I teach how to analyze primary and secondary sources to help students develop their knowledge production. The ability to analyze sources and think critically is a skill that allows one to succeed in the classroom, but also in many workplaces. Students have said that after taking my courses in the humanities, students are more well equipped with the abilities to read, write, and think creatively. SB 37 tries to infantilize these young adults during critical moments in their maturation processes. Moreover, the oversight SB37 proposes also limits the expertise of professors in favor of government appointed officials. This weakens public universities, which have led the country in many disciplines and fields, especially ethnic studies.

Nicole Ramsey, Dr
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

My name is Nicole Ramsey. I speak today as a private citizen with a deep commitment to public higher education. I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 37 and all its iterations. As a first-generation college student and the first in my family to earn an advanced degree, I've experienced the transformative power of education firsthand. Throughout my academic career, I've had the privilege of teaching students across Texas in courses on Identity, Migration, Indigeneity, and Gender. Many of my students are also the first in their families to attend college. They enter the classroom with urgent questions about the world and leave with the tools to navigate it with clarity, empathy, and purpose.This type of learning environment is built through trust, intellectual honesty, and the freedom to engage challenging topics. My research, which focuses on race, nation, and belonging in the Americas, began with questions I asked as a college student. Today, those same questions continue to shape my work and guide my teaching. The relationship between research and teaching is mutually reinforcing. What I learn from students informs my scholarship, and my scholarship supports student learning. SB 37 would make it nearly impossible to sustain that relationship.This bill gives power over curriculum to people who are not trained in the subjects they want to regulate. It restricts academic freedom and limits educators' ability to meet students where they are. It would flatten classroom conversations and create environments where students no longer feel respected, seen, or encouraged to grow. Educators do more than deliver content. We are mentors and advocates for our students' intellectual and personal development. The impact we have may not always be captured in data, but it is deeply felt in the lives of our students.I chose to build my career in Texas because of its strong reputation for academic excellence and vibrant intellectual life. If SB 37 passes, that reputation will be at risk. It will drive away students and educators who are drawn to rigorous and inclusive learning environments. It will also restrict the potential of students who are eager to engage critically with the world around them.I urge you to reject SB 37. Public higher education must remain a space for inquiry, dialogue, and growth. Texas students deserve the opportunity to learn, question, and thrive without political interference.

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Izabella De la Garza
Myself
Austin, TX

The people of Texas vehemently oppose this bill, as proven by advocacy and testimony over the years of your efforts to dismantle DEI. Please listen to us and reconsider your actions. Banning DEI and revoking public universities' autonomy will harm the quality of education and the experiences of students, faculty, and staff. It would rob them of the opportunity to become more informed, skilled, and empathetic. We are all exhausted, but we refuse to give up.

Nakisa Mokhtari
Self
Austin, TX

No comment

Daniel Braaten
Self
San Antonio, TX

Hello, My name is Daniel Braaten and I am speaking as a private citizen against all versions of SB 37. I am currently an Associate Professor of Political Science at Texas A&M University-San Antonio and I am also President-Elect of the campus AAUP chapter. There are many concerning aspects of this legislation but I would like to single out two very problematic pieces. First, the clause prohibiting courses "from requiring or attempting to requiring a student to adopt a belief that any race, sex, or ethnicity or social, political or religious belief in inherently superior to any other . . . or to adopt any other similar ideology." And second the provision creating the "Office of Ombudsman." I believe that these two provisions will create a significant chilling effect in the classroom.

I teach the core Federal Government course required for all Texas students. In that course we discuss and cover topics such as the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement, and significant court cases such as Brown v Board of Education, Loving v Virginia, and Obergefell v Hodges. These topics require discussion of race, ethnicity, sex, and ideology. Current faculty in my department have expressed to me their fear of teaching such topics as they are concerned about someone submitting a complaint against them through the new Office of The Ombudsman. Furthermore, our department has hired a new faculty member who is schedule to begin teaching in the Fall. He has expressed to me his concern about moving to Texas to begin his career as he is worried about political censorship, the loss of academic freedom, and possible job loss. The potential of losing faculty to this legislation would seriously affect our department's ability to provide the core courses of Federal Government and Texas Government.

Needless to say, teaching from a place of fear is not effective teaching and will only damage the education Texas students receive by preventing faculty from approaching topics where they concerned one mis-statement might cost them their job.

Christian Mira
self
Austin, TX

Hello,

My name is Christian Mira and I'm writing in opposition to SB37. I am extremely concerned with the level of big government entering public universities in Texas. As a graduating Senior from UT Austin entering the energy industry, it would make sense that I continue to work in Houston. This is a common pipeline of Texas schools developing top talent and working in energy, but I fear there will be less talent and less interest in Texas. Following my graduation I've chosen to move to Washington. The level of government intervention into UT has gone too far. Faculty are subject matter experts and should be trusted to develop curriculum without political appointees. Nobody knows better than faculty how to manage a university. The legislator is developing even more bureaucracy as if that's ever been the solution. I don't stand for this big government power steal. It devalues my degree and will turn talent away from Texas. Please consider this and vote against SB 37.

Thank you,
Christian Mira

Alex Beasley
self, Assistant Professor
Austin, TX

My name is Alex Beasley and I am a faculty member testifying against all versions of SB 37 as a private citizen.

My comments focus on the bill's efforts to address the burdensome cost of higher education. Student debt is one of my highest political concerns. But this bill does not provide effective remedies. Instead, it proposes a sweeping strategy of government overreach, with state regulators determining which courses of study can even exist. This approach is at odds with Texas values of a free marketplace of ideas, limited government intervention, and prioritizing the state's workforce needs.

Some versions of this bill call for departments and majors to lose funding or to be closed if their "return on investment" is not satisfactory. But penalizing individual majors is not the right approach.

First, the most common discussions of "ROI" in higher education almost always assume that it is the humanities that do not deliver adequate job outcomes. However, at the most basic level, workers with a bachelor's degree in the liberal arts earn almost twice as much per year as their peers with a high school diploma, making their degrees clearly "worth it."

Second, the bill does not define how "ROI" will be measured. In the long term, humanities majors catch up to the earnings of their peers in other majors. If ROI is measured purely in terms of salary upon graduation, it does a disservice to the life experiences of graduates across the state of Texas and the needs of Texas employers.

Because many Texas employers do want employees with the skills they learn in humanities departments. The kinds of soft skills that the humanities develop - critical thinking, research, writing, team building, collaboration, and communication - are the skills that employers repeatedly rank as more important than field-specific technical skills for new hires.

Technical skills become outdated quickly. This bill runs the risk of prioritizing majors that may become obsolete, while defunding or eliminating majors that might be crucial in the future. In fact, recent analysis suggests that the rise of AI will make humanities majors and their skill sets more important than ever before, because humanities training focuses on "doing that which only humans can."

The real challenge, as I see it, is this. In 1990, state funds provided 34% of the operating budget of the University of Texas at Austin, with students paying about 9% in tuition. By 2020, those numbers had shifted radically: the state provided only 10% of funds, with students paying 20%. Addressing this stark change would be the most effective way to tackle the very real problem of Texas graduates' student loan debt. Strategizing to fix the funding shortfall that has led students to take on more student debt would serve all Texans. Installing state regulators to determine what students are allowed to learn at the institutions that they overwhelmingly pay for with their tuition dollars would not. Thank you.

Kimberly Garza
self, professor
Austin, TX

SB37 will inhibit innovation, research, and intellectual curiosity that has put Texas public higher ed institutions at the top of national lists. I already know amazing educators and beloved-by-students professors who are leaving Texas public institutions because of the existence of SP 37. And you can bet it will be all but impossible to attract top talent to Texas universities if SB 37 passes. Who loses? Immediately: current and incoming students. In the long-run: all Texans. For what? An ideological power-play by elected officials? We have one of the world's biggest economies and that needs to be fueled by higher education administrators and professors doing what they've been trained to do. As they have done. Not more government bureaucracy.

Adam Costanzo
self - History Professor
Corpus Christi, TX

I address the legislature today as a history professor and as a citizen of Texas. I am not speaking on behalf of any other group or organization. I am strongly against SB 37.

I'll focus on two reasons for the sake of brevity.

1) Cost. This legislation is certain to raise the cost of a college education in Texas by creating additional bureaucracy in Austin. That bureaucracy will need to be paid for from tax dollars that might have otherwise gone to research and teaching.

Next, the bill will raise costs at every campus by making it necessary to comply with the whims of those overseers and the other provisions of the law. This is typically a costly job done by the lawyer-staffed compliance offices on each campus.

2) Quality of Education: First, this bill will certainly diminish the number and quality of scholars willing to come to Texas to teach and research at our institutions. The faculty employment market is one of the few in the nation that is fully national. If Texas cannot cannot attract the top teachers and researchers from that national market, it will be the state and its students that lose out. We have already seen fewer applicants in recent years because of legislative interference like this bill.

Next, the bill will diminish the quality of education in Texas by limiting the topics our students are permitted to learn about. Unlike a K-12 school, an institution of higher education should be seen as a place for students to engage with all of the ideas at play in our society, even the ones that many people might disagree with. I've worked with our students long enough to know that they are perfectly capable of learning about different ideas and ways of life while retaining the core beliefs that their parents and their Texas communities sent them to college with.

In my introductory courses I explain to my students that the beauty of history is that we keep changing our understanding of the past because we keep changing in the present. And that the constant flow of new books, articles, reviews, and responses across the historical profession is the way that we evaluate and adapt to new ideas.

I also tell them that history is a boring and static subject only in the regimes around the world where the dictators in power tell the historians what they can and cannot say about their nations' past. That's true in China where historians may not mention Tiananmen Square. And that's true in Russia where the economic disaster of the 1990s must be the fault of the West (and democracy) and not the fault of Soviet mismanagement.

I hope very much that you'll vote against this bill so that it does not also become true in Texas. Let's leave our students with the opportunity to study all aspects of the world around them without broad and unnecessary restrictions from this legislature or other political appointees.

Michelle Ferrer
TWU
Krum, TX

This should not even be considered as it incredibly detrimental

Mary Elizabeth Ibarrola, Dr.
Self, professor
Austin, TX

Hello, my name is Dr. Mary Elizabeth Ibarrola, I am a professor at UT Austin. I am writing today as a private individual opposed to all versions of SB 37.

The Higher Education Committee members and the faculty of Texas's public universities, folks like me, share a concern for young Texans, their futures and their communities. I have had more than one homeless student, countless who were working full-time while enrolled full-time, and even more who were the first in their family to attend college. It is vital that I help each one succeed.

As an archaeologist, I have a particular way of tackling that goal. I work to help students learn from the past to understand our structures and institutions today. I build their skills as critical thinkers so they can interpret the information they gather and make decisions to shape the future.

With SB 37 you are telling me that I need more oversight, that you cannot trust me with the future of these students. While I accept that you may not trust me, let's be clear what oversight for a professor like me currently looks like:

- Each semester students review my teaching and each year a colleague evaluates my teaching. Their scores and comments become part of my record.
- When I publish, whether a book or an article, it is reviewed by a minimum of three peer reviewers and one editor, all experts in the field. All of my published work goes on my record.
- When I apply for grants and permits, my work is reviewed by a committee of peer experts as well as state and federal employees, all experts. Thes grants and permits go on my record.
- This record was evaluated by my department and administrators from my college three years into my time at UT and will be evaluated again six years in, this time adding peers from other universities to the review.
- My record is then continually evaluated every six years after that.
- For all of these reviews, the board of regents of my university can ultimately reverse or amend decisions made at the department or college level with reasonable cause.

Which is why I question, even if you don't trust me, why it is necessary to create a parallel structure to the existing oversight of the university system. SB37 is an oversight octopus.

This oversight octopus will not work for our universities, which will suffer when critical hiring and curriculum decisions are made by non-experts. Nor will it work for the state of Texas, imposing a burdensome workload which appointed boards will be ill-equipped to complete and an all-powerful ombudsman responsible only to the governor.

Most importantly, this will not work for our students. SB37 will create an unnecessary burden for all of higher-ed in Texas and confirm to educators that we are not trusted and not wanted in Texas. It won't change who is willing and interesting in serving students, but it will drive those people out of Texas. SB37 will undoubtedly hurt young Texans, their futures and their communities.

Thank-you for your time.

Kathleen Reeves, Dr.
Self, Professor
Austin, TX

SB 37 is a Soviet-style bill that crushes free speech. Texas students will not be able to learn critical thinking. Serious academics in all fields will leave the state. Senators who vote for this bill will be remembered for creating stifling bureaucracy. I urge the Senate not to pass this bill.

Philip Boehm
self - author and sometime lecturer
Houston, TX

As a 6th generation Texan I am appalled by this attempted intrusion into the governance of public institutions of higher education. Our universities can only thrive when students are free to explore topics of the richest diversity, and where faculty lead by designing new perspectives of academic inquiry. The "oversight" that this bill calls for is in reality a form of censorship that reminds me of totalitarian practices in the Soviet Union under Stalin, when only certain party-approved sciences were taught. For the sake of our students -- for whom a richly diverse curriculum can only help sharpen their critical thinking, DO NOT PASS THIS BILL!

Seth Chandler
self, professor of law
HOUSTON, TX

I am Seth J. Chandler, writing as a Texas citizen; I am a Professor of Law at the University of Houston but my views do not necessarily reflect those of the University of Houston.

I write in opposition to SB 37. I want to focus on one key problem: proposed section 51.315(b)(5) of the Committee Substitute bill approved by the Senate. The provision's core flaw is vagueness, forbidden by Keyishian?v.?Bd.?of?Regents,?385?U.S.?589?(1967).

Undefined trigger—"require or attempt to require." Is a professor's statement of a historically accepted proposition, tested on an exam, a "requirement"? Is ignoring class-wide peer pressure to adopt a view ("Israel is a neo-colonial apartheid state") an "attempt"? The line is nowhere drawn.

Overbroad protected classes. "Social, political, or religious belief" covers virtually every normative proposition discussed in a liberal-arts curriculum. The instructor asks whether liberal democracy produces better human-rights outcomes than authoritarianism. The syllabus assigns readings concluding that democracy is normatively preferable to the alternatives. Is encouraging students to embrace that view an "attempt to require" adoption of the belief that one political ideology is superior? Indeed, saying "Free markets inherently outproduce communist economies" would appear to be caught by this statute.

Elastic comparative language—"inherently superior." Does "superior" refer to moral worth, empirical performance, or context-specific advantage? Absent clarification, objective statements about average group differences may be swept in. Saying men are, on average, stronger than women, and marking an answer to the contrary as incorrect might violate the statute.

Catch-all clause—"other similar ideology." Section 51.315(b)(5) never defines "similar," leaving instructors to guess which additional traits (age, disability, nationality) or beliefs (democracy v. totalitarianism) might be covered. A psychology course covers evidence that certain memory functions decline after age 70. Students must accurately summarize the findings. Are they being forced to adopt a belief that young brains are "superior" to old brains?

Interpretations by the Ombudsman of the statute after its enactment cannot cure facial vagueness; indeed, reliance on shifting guidance underscores the original indeterminacy. An Ombudsman's ad-hoc list of 'approved' views—cannot cure vagueness and would itself be prohibited viewpoint discrimination. See Rosenberger?v.?Rector &?Visitors of the University of?Virginia,?515?U.S.?819?(1995). Faculty cannot predict whether ordinary discussions of ability, performance, or cultural achievement fall under the prohibition. The rational response is to avoid controversial or comparative content—an outcome at odds with the marketplace-of-ideas function of higher education.

Section?51.315(b)(5) will chill ordinary instruction; strike or clarify it.

Gabriel Aguilar
Self
Fort worth, TX

SB 37 will hinder the progress that our public universities have made on our economy in our great state. Expert faculty have driven Texas to be number 1 in the number of Research 1 universities in the country. We do research big time and make significant impact on the economy of Texas and the US. I’m proud that Governor Abbot took initiative ten years ago to invest in Texas universities and put the faith in our faculty to do so. In the past ten years we have grown from 4 to now 16 Research 1 universities because of the leadership of faculty. SB 37 threatens the ability for our universities to continue this great work. I ask that you oppose SB 37 and continue to allow Texas to be number 1 for our students, stakeholders, and economy.

Veronica Morrison
Self: teacher
SAN ANTONIO, TX

This totalitarian outrage will clinch the descent into fascism that has begun in this once-democratic nation.

Mark Grose
Self
Abilene, TX

We should allow independence for our institutions of higher education.

Gregory Pulte, Dr.
Dallas ISD
Dallas, TX

Esteemed Higher Education Committee:
I am testifying against SB37. This is a bad, blatantly overreaching bill. I urge you to reject it. No academic will want to teach in any Texas university again with this high-handedness. The bill hamstrings our colleges and universities as it dumbs them down. SB 37 Gives political appointees control over what students? can learn in courses— muzzling faculty expertise and?censoring critical thought. SB37 restricts faculty in discussing topics of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, religion, social beliefs in classes. SB37 creates curriculum oversight committees in each institution and governing board, with faculty oversight removed. SB37 creates committee appointed by Governor, Lt. Governor, and House Speaker to streamline number and content of courses in core curriculum required for Associate and Bachelor degrees.
This is a horrible idea that never should see the light of day. I urge you to vote against SB37.
Dr. Gregory Pulte

Alex Stehn
Self, Professor
McAllen, TX

Dear Chairman Creighton and Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Alex Stehn, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and President of RGV PUEDE, a nonprofit dedicated to advancing dual language education across the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. Although I hold both of these positions, I'm not speaking on behalf of these organizations but rather as a private citizen and lifelong Texan.

I am against Senate Bill 37. SB37 radically politicizes curriculum and faculty governance by transferring authority from academic institutions to politically-motivated, government-appointed boards. This shift threatens the foundational principles of academic freedom and shared governance that have long underpinned the excellence of Texas public universities. Texas already has the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, a government agency that oversees all public colleges and universities in the state, including their general education courses. SB37 is therefore not only a bad idea, it is an economically wasteful one.

As a scholar specializing in American philosophy, my work emphasizes the importance of free inquiry for American democracy. The proposed legislation's vague prohibitions against teaching certain ideologies risk stifling our democracy and represent an attack on the open marketplace of ideas. Furthermore, SB37's restrictions would radically undermine the public good and defeat the most basic reason that public universities exist in Texas, namely, to serve the people of Texas. By limiting the scope of what can be taught through a political process rather than an academic process, we would also be moving towards state-controlled education. This is more suited to communist countries dedicated to thought-control and government propaganda than an American democracy dedicated to free inquiry and truth-seeking.

I also urge you to consider the long-term implications of this bill. Preserving academic autonomy is not just about protecting educators; it's about ensuring that students receive an excellent education free from government overreach and control. As a faculty member who regularly serves on search committees, I've already witnessed top candidates rejecting job offers because they don't want to work for a state university system where faculty don't have the freedom to teach and students don't have the freedom to learn.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Alex Stehn

Betty Butler
self
San Antonio, TX

This is the worst bill I've seen in a long time. The whole purpose of institutes of higher education is to expose young people to a wide variety of ideas. Politicians should have NO control over the content of higher education or the hiring/firing of faculty. This bill will stifle critical thinking and is just a propaganda grab. Shame on you for even considering it.

Danya Serrano
Self/Professor
Galveston, TX

Hello, I am Dr. Danya Serrano. I'm speaking for myself as a private individual with nearly 20 years of education and psychological research experience, and as a three-time graduate of a Texas public institution.
I strongly oppose all versions of SB 37, which would undermine the autonomy of faculty and the motivation and success of all students, including students native to the great state of Texas. As a professor and education researcher, I am deeply disturbed by aspects of SB37 that would give power to an unelected committee to decide what degree programs and courses are of “value” and the imposition of a potentially convoluted and subjective rating system to make these assessments.
Passing this bill would be deeply misguided, as we have already seen the outcomes of similar policies in K-12 education. The state takeover of school districts with unelected governing boards, the narrowing of the curriculum, and school rating systems has resulted in high teacher attrition, reduced opportunities for creativity and the development of critical thinking skills among students, loss of local control and community engagement, and no evidence of improved academic performance or career preparedness.
The value of a college education cannot be uniformly measured or reduced to a financial cost-benefit analysis. The college years are a critical period when we begin to explore and understand our values, interests, and personalities. The breadth and diversity of college courses available to us as Texans facilitate this understanding and help us form a healthy sense of self. Developing a healthy sense of identity is not something to be feared, but embraced, as it is associated with healthier relationships, greater civic engagement, resilience, and job satisfaction. I urge you to oppose SB37 as it would hinder opportunities for all students to pursue their interests and to explore and commit to who they are, which will be a detriment to our communities, our workforce, and our state.

Ralph Campbell
Self
Ft. Worth, TX

I oppose this. Bill 37. It gives too much control over matters that could best be answered by educators that understand the course material and its place in the requirements for particular degrees that legislators might not be familiar with. Wish Analytic Geometry wasn’t one of my requirements. How many legislators are fluent in the math of rotating equations through space.
Thanks for considering my wish for defeating SB 37

Molly Roy
Self/Academic Librarian
Austin, TX

Written Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 37
My name is Dr. Molly Roy, and I am speaking for myself as a private citizen.
I live in zip code 78749, District 46, Rep. Sheryl Cole.

I write to express my strong opposition to SB 37. This bill will be profoundly detrimental to the quality and competitiveness of higher education institutions in Texas.

I have two advanced degrees from the University of Texas at Austin, where I currently work as a professional staff member. My success in graduate school rested in large part on the fact that I was exposed to different points of view during my research, not as indoctrination, but as an exercise in critical thinking, and a rich opportunity to clarify my own values, beliefs and place in the world. Along the way, I was supported and advised by faculty members who stand as experts in their fields, who should be trusted with curricular oversight. My decision to pursue a doctorate began with a professor lending me a challenging book—an act that could be preposterously flagged within the blurry scope of SB 37, leading to self-censorship and a fear of retribution that will suffocate curiosity. This bill will stifle the academic freedom and rigor that propelled my work forward, pushing motivated students and qualified faculty to take their talents and resources elsewhere.

In my current role as an academic librarian, I work to ensure equitable access to information and support the development of information literacy skills, training students to be responsible consumers and producers of information. SB 37, in its attempts to foreclose certain areas of study and restrict access to information, will directly interfere with students' development of information literacy, as outlined by nationally recognized standards. These skills are paramount for professional and civic participation, which SB 37 proclaims to be in service of. Texas legislation on higher education is already impacting our ability to attract top-tier librarians and information professionals, and this bill will further exacerbate recruitment issues, diminishing our national standing as a sought-after institution of academic excellence.

As SB 37 erodes the reputation and capacity for innovation within institutions of higher education, it will also damage the economy, doing all Texans a disservice, even those who don't feel that they have a stake in this issue.
I urge the committee to preserve the vitality of these economic engines: reject SB 37.

Jaden Campbell, Student
Black Men United (Texas State University)
San Marcos, TX

Good morning my name is Jaden Campbell. I'm a junior at Texas State University, and for the past two years I've served as President of an organization called Black Man United. I enter these comments to note my opposition to the bill SB 37. With the Anti- DEI policies that have been enacted by our governor and our president, academic support dedicated to minority outcomes have already been heavily eroded. This bill continues the war on history and intellectualism by nefariously seeking to control college curricula on race , gender, and politics. This is the Antithesis of small government and freedom politics that have been promised to the citizens of Texas and instead reeks of Americana Fascism meant to capture the minds of a generation that can already see clearly through the lies of the past. By placing curriculum in Texas Universities under political appointees we will further alienate our minority students, resulting in a brain drain of quality to students to other states and worse educational outcomes. Further politicization of Higher Education in the state of Texas will only result in disillusionment and degradation of our universities. I urge this committee to commit to the principles of Free speech and the "marketplace" of ideas by allowing universities to focus on educational outcomes to create well rounded thoughtful students rather than using the heavy hand of government to strangle education. Thank you for your time.

Joseph Velasco

Texas Council of Faculty Senates

Alpine, TX

My name is Joseph Velasco, and I rise today as a private citizen to strongly oppose Senate Bill 37.
Let’s be clear: SB 37 is a direct threat to Texas’s economy, our universities, and the freedoms that define us.
First, this bill would cripple the economic power of Texas universities. Our public institutions drive innovation, create companies, attract investment, and produce the workforce that powers Texas’s growth. SB 37 sends a loud message to top scholars and entrepreneurs: Texas doesn’t trust you. These people will leave — taking with them research dollars, businesses, and talent.
You can’t claim to be pro-business while pushing policies that scare away innovation and investment.
Second, SB 37 tramples academic freedom, the cornerstone of America’s leadership in higher education. Once the legislature dictates what ideas are allowed, universities stop being engines of discovery and become mouthpieces for whoever holds power. Today it’s the ideas you dislike — tomorrow it’s the ones you hold dear.
If you start banning thought, you are no longer defending liberty — you are dismantling it.
Third, this bill betrays conservative principles. True conservatives stand for limited government, free inquiry, and local control. SB 37 expands government power into the classroom, micromanages ideas, and crushes local autonomy. It tells administrations, faculty, and students that politicians in Austin — not citizens and communities — will decide what’s acceptable to teach and learn.
That is not conservative leadership. That’s big government, plain and simple.
Finally, SB 37 weakens democracy itself. A healthy democracy depends on citizens who can think critically, reason carefully, and debate openly. Public universities build those citizens. When you attack higher education, you attack the very infrastructure of freedom.
Members, you face a simple choice:
Protect Texas’s future or sabotage it.
If you care about keeping Texas the best place in America to learn, to innovate, to build businesses, and to raise families, you must reject SB 37.
You cannot be pro-Texas and anti-education.
You cannot be pro-freedom and pro-censorship.
You cannot be pro-economy and anti-talent.
Vote NO on SB 37. Protect Texas’s universities. Protect Texas’s future. Protect Texas’s freedom.

Jose Herrera

self

El Paso, TX

This bill demonstrates a profound misunderstanding of how faculty senates truly operate within most Texas universities and the concept of shared governance. A university is not a corporation, and its structure requires a mutually respectful relationship between faculty and upper administration. Even the most talented university president, is incapable of being an expert on all the different disciplines and for a university to operate in the best interests of the students, there is the need for the respectful acknowledgement and trust in the expertise of a college's faculty. SB 37, as written, would essentially nullify that bond of trust and respect that exists between administrators and their faculty to the detriment of student welfare.

Adele Nelson, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

Dear Members of the Public Education Committee. My name is Adele Nelson and I am a faculty member writing to express my opposition to all versions of SB 37.

I just returned from a research trip to The Museum of Modern Art, New York where I worked earlier in my career & where 4 of my former students are employed in curatorial jobs - these are the most sought-after jobs in the museum field. Academic freedom is the cornerstone to my training of these & other students so they are competitive in the workforce.

If SB 37 passes I genuinely have no idea how I will teach my classes. MoMA & other employers have no interest in employing students who can only recite facts & figures about artworks - a memorization, old-fashioned version of my discipline. Employers need critical thinkers who are excellent communicators, writers and researchers. Their education must have cultivated in them the rigorous & creative habits of a curious mind. Without critical, questioning inquiry and dialogue in my classroom, I cannot train students.

Thank you for your consideration. I respectively urge you to vote no on SB 37. Sincerely, Adele Nelson

Jason Mellard
self/teacher
AUSTIN, TX

I am a proud seventh generation Texan and a product of Texas public schools and state universities. I have dedicated my life and career to the research and teaching of Texas history. Our state, and our state's robust schools, mean everything to me, and I take seriously my responsibility to educate the Texans in my classrooms for the challenges of tomorrow. I urge our legislators to opposed the passage of SB 37 because it would destroy the autonomy and integrity that make higher education institutions work for Texas students. Our state constitution calls on us to field universities "of the first class," and we Texans have built those universities. They have effectively served generations of students in finding their paths in the world and the careers that sustain them. When it comes to the provisions of SB 37, experts in their fields should determine curriculum, not state-appointed ideologues. Instructors should not fear open and free classroom discussions that don't tack with the winds of political caprice. Personnel matters should be the concern of the university's respective colleges and departments with oversight from the president, provost, and regents, without introducing other bodies who do not have adequate knowledge of the workings of the university on the ground and would only introduce further levels of bureaucracy and red tape that eat up taxpayer dollars. For these reasons and so many more, SB 37 creates problems rather than solves them.

Gillian Parker
Self
Austin, TX

I oppose SB37 as I believe it goes too far and would restrict intellectual freedom and progress. I do support some measure of transparency in regards to financial returns; many students regret degrees that have a low return on investment. It would be great if there were tools to make more informed decisions. However, the bill goes too far in mandating the closure of programs that do not meet the criteria, and in require reports directly to the governor and legislature. Part of the benefit of universities is that they can stand independently as havens for free speech and thought. The government should not have authority over what is taught in universities. Please vote no and let the people choose programs that work for them.

Billy Monroe, Dr.
Self - Political Science Professor
College Station, TX

I would argue this bill limits academic freedom and is dangerous to the first amendment. It will also likely not fix the problems it tries to address. Faculty senates are advisory at best (I've served on one for 5 years and we cannot even get elected department chairs). The real issue for several reasons is administrative bloat and power in higher education. This bill only gives Presidents, Deans, etc more power when they already have too much. They are also almost always unelected by the way. There are too many administrators and the costs they create are a huge reason why higher education is so expensive. They also create financial waste, due to incompetence or poor decision making. In terms of students, they already have an ability to make the lives of faculty members miserable simply because of poor grades (often as a result of poor decisions by the student) or biased student evaluations. The student grade appeal process and student evaluations are a necessary evil because students have become the "customer" in higher education so why is there a need to go further? There is even more pressure on faculty because many are now non tenure track so why would they not be targeted for teaching the "wrong"ideology? It would lead to many complaints, witch hunts, and a massive waste of money/time. The other possibility is good professors leave or teach the bare minimum to not getting trouble. Grade inflation is already an issue and I am willing to bet the legislature is not looking to devalue a college degree. I believe the curriculum should be reviewed (accountability is important) every 5 years by faculty, admin, and others to ensure quality education, but that means a well rounded education. Some problems should be abolished for not enrolling or graduating enough students. Why not get rid of history or government because it's not STEM or does not have obvious careers when these disciplines teach essential skills like critical thinking? I'm being rhetorical because disciplines like political science are incredibly important, but the point is clear. What if a discipline like history is not seen as foundational? Syllabi are also publicly available so it should be easy to see what it is being taught. Universities should be the "marketplace of ideas" as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice once said, and protecting free speech allows that. The state legislature holds public universities and their faculties accountable through the tenure process, post tenure review, annual evaluations, student evaluations, posting of syllabi, looking at the budget, having control of the curriculum either directly or indirectly through the Higher Education Coordinating Board/Boards of Regents. Let these processes work as intended and look for ways to solve issues directly.

Peter Flamm
self, musician and teacher
San Antonio, TX

This is completely unnecessary and :Orwellian bill. Stop threatening teachers. This bill is an embarrassment and an example of political correctness and cancel culture run amok. Yes cancel culture! What's the difference between your right wing version and the left-win version except that you think you're right and they're wrong? It's pitiful. Stop with all the performative legislation and do something to help people.

Gregg La Montagne
Self
Austin, TX

I am in opposition of such overreach by the government. This bill is truly big brother and smack of authoritarianism

Bill Carroll

Self. Professor and licensed professional engineer.

Arlington, TX

I'm writing to urge the House Education Committee to vote NO on SB37. I view the bill as largely redundant, unnecessary, burdensome, and costly. Not only costly financially but in damage to Texas institutions of higher education both nationally and internationally. A decade or so ago, the Texas Legislature wisely passed legislation to develop more research universities in Texas to attract more talent and dollars to the state. That legislation was hugely successful! We now have 16 Carnegie R1 institutions in the state when previously there was only a handful. I'm very fearful that SB37 will undermine that progress and set us back in many ways. Let me now share some of my observations and concerns. Governing boards — it seems that much of their duties are covered by The Coordinating Board, system regents, and campus presidents. So why are governing boards needed? Faculty senates—to my knowledge most, if not all, faculty senates are currently advisory in nature. So why are the proposed rules necessary? Having presidents appoint senators would have a chilling effect on discussion of important issues. Restricting hiring and grevience processes — the former would likely make it even more difficult to attract top scholars and administrators to come the state. The latter could deny individuals due process and lead to an increase in lawsuits against the institutions and the state. Program closure — it's difficult to put the value of programs in dollars and cents. It seems that the value of a program is best measured by its enrollment and number of graduates. The Coordinating Board already has policy on this and regularly reviews programs for compliance. Also, the value of a program is some times a local issue with decisions best made at the campus level. Ombudsman Office — it's hard to understand the purpose of this office or how it could be effective without a large, expensive office being established. In conclusion, I will be appreciative of your taking my comments in to consideration and voting NO on SB37. I'm a native Texan and have earned three degrees from Texas public institutions of higher education. I'm proud of our universities and want to keep them strong and prospering. I'm concerned that SB37 takes us in the wrong direction. Again, thank you for your consideration.

Rhiannon Nelson

self

Floresville, TX

I strongly oppose SB 37. This bill threatens the quality of higher education in Texas by giving political appointees—not trained educators—control over what students can learn. It pressures professors to self-censor and avoid teaching essential real-world topics, which weakens classroom discussions and limits our ability to think critically.

By shifting authority away from academic experts, SB 37 undermines both the freedom to teach and the freedom to learn. Professors who feel their academic freedom is at risk may choose to leave Texas, resulting in a loss of top-tier talent and directly harming students. Programs in education, social work, liberal arts, and communication are especially vulnerable, but the damage will affect all fields, including STEM, where innovation depends on open inquiry and interdisciplinary understanding.

This bill also diverts resources from students and instruction to compliance and oversight, making education less accessible and more politicized. As a student, I've gained valuable insights from courses that address complex issues like history, race, gender, and social systems—courses that challenge me to understand the world and my role within it. SB 37 would erase that depth of education.

Politicians pushing for this bill often lack the training or background to evaluate curriculum content. Have they conducted peer-reviewed research or taught in university classrooms? If not, how are they qualified to decide what can and cannot be taught? Censoring education doesn't promote neutrality—it removes essential knowledge and undermines critical thinking. If we prioritize political control over academic integrity, Texas risks falling behind in innovation, progress, and workforce preparation. A public that is denied access to diverse ideas is not being educated; it is being controlled. And where there is no freedom to think, there can be no progress.

I urge you to reject SB 37 and protect the future of Texas education.

Nadia Luis
Self
Austin, TX

HB37 is a thinly veiled attempt to crack down on higher education that I cannot stand for. The return on investment rating system will not be reflective of the quality of a holistic education because it will allow for targeting of academic disciplines within the liberal arts, which are necessary for promoting an economically prosperous and civilly engaged society. By removing the agency of college faculty through the creation of a board of regents, you are restricting the quality of higher education and removing the legitimacy of higher education. College faculty are experts in their fields, fields that help drive a prosperous and ethical society. As a graduate student at Texas State University, I fear for what would become of my graduate program under the proposed conditions of this bill. By taking away local control of universities and colleges who are best suited to describe what to do with their resources, S.B. 37 continues to centralize policing by the board of regents, subjecting the university and college content to the political whims of the government. This will affect classroom discussion by making it less open and honest. Additionally, this will have real impact on the quality of communication skills students are able to build through their classroom discussion, often through the discussion of hard topics like race, sexuality, class, and gender identity.

Katherine Parker
Self, retired
Humble, TX

SB 37 puts politics above academic standards, threatening the reputation of your alma mater and all Texas public universities.

If passed, this bill could drive away top professors, weaken the quality of education and research, and undermine Texas's hard-earned status as a national leader in Tier 1 research.

Limiting academic freedom not only risks our universities' excellence—it could also reduce the value of your degree.

Stand up for academic integrity. Oppose SB 37.

Asif Chowdhury
Self
Sugar Land, TX

My name is Asif Chowdhury and I am a GCSW graduate student. SB 37 calls for review of every single minor degree and certificate program every five years, based solely on how many students are enrolling—a shortsighted move that undermines the very heart of what our universities are about. Enrollment numbers alone will never be an accurate measure of a program's worth or contribution to society (Watkins, 2024) and leaving out faculty and industry practitioners from such reviews fatally undercuts any alleged rigor of the evaluation (Watkins, 2024).
This language also provides no definition of low enrollment, which puts programs on the chopping block purely based on cyclical variances. And while the number of students pursuing studies in any given discipline will always come in waves, SB 37 offers no protection against these natural cycles. Hulbert and Harkins (2024) even show that these sudden cuts inhibit innovation and critical thought, doming our academic landscape into single minded tunnel vision mid-paragraph (Hulbert & Harkins, 2024).
SB 37, by requiring that institutions justify the continued existence of programs based on data from a “specific industry,” discriminates against the humanities, the arts, and intentionally and deliberately the social sciences, including social work. Graduates of these disciplines possess skills such as critical analysis and communication that lend themselves to a huge variety of career paths (Robson et al., 2023), even if their disciplines don not really align to job-placement metrics directly.
But SB 37 is perhaps most dangerous of all, taking curriculum control out of the hands of the academic experts who best understand the substance being taught, and giving it to politically appointed boards. But as Allen (2016) goes on to point out, when academic freedom is stripped from scholars, open inquiry — one of the foundational elements of democratic engagement — is chilled. The result will be that teachers that are left will self-censor and classroom debate will be cut down to size to grammatical norms.
The effects on the ground are already visible. GCSW witnessed the departure of its dean, Alan J. Dettlaff in the political backlash of 2022—a decision that incited the departure of a handful of faculties alongside disruption to our curriculum offerings (Inside Higher Ed, 2023). Nationally, more than 475 of the 1,900 Texas professors surveyed said they would explore opportunities outside the state instead of teaching under such restrictions (Melhado, 2023), which is a trend that directly attacks the quality of class and mentorship at GCSW.
I have mourned the impact of these educators in my own student experience: fewer specialty classes are available, mentorship is less accessible, and the immediate back-and-forth exchange of complex ideas is being cut short often (Finley, 2021). In turn, this brings my belief in the meaning of my degree into question when courses are decided upon more on political lines than because

kathleen Crea
Self
Spring, TX

I do not support this bill, no dumbing down of higher education by these members who are too dumb to see the importance of all critical thinking. Brighton, my representative, is one of the dumb ones.

Lou Ann Montana, Ms
Self
Spring, TX

I am writing to strongly urge you to OPPOSE SB 37.

I believe the state government already has and exerts more than enough power and influence over our state higher education institutions. SB 37 would allow too much interference and negatively impact learning, teaching, and research.

Thank you,
Lou Ann Montana

DiAnna Hynds, Dr.
self, Professor
Denton, TX

I am DiAnna Hynds, Professor of Biology at TWU, representing myself as a private citizen and not any organization, institution, or group. A proud supporter of Texas public colleges, universities, and health institutions, today I am strongly opposing any form of SB 37. This bill promotes big government and would strip our great institutions of their competitive ability in the nation and world.

SB 37 is an undue Big-Government intrusion into public higher education. SB 37 is a power grab that replaces shared governance and local control with political control and centralized decisions from a board of political appointees. Rather than the current balanced approach, this makes higher education inherently partisan. It is not academic reform, it's a hostile takeover that undermines the expertise of faculty who have worked for decades to become respected scholars and leaders in their areas of expertise. I am a neuroscientist who studies, devises, and tests new treatments for serious nervous system conditions like Alzheimer's disease, autism spectrum disorders, and brain and spinal cord injury. SB 37 doesn't hurt just my students and me, but harms all Texans. SB 37 would undermine educational quality, innovation and research, and academic freedom, thereby infringing on our constitutional rights.

Under SB 37, course content is entirely politicized (something I consciously avoid). Vague bans on discussing “race, sex, or ethnicity, or social, political, or religious beliefs” will chill speech, censor history, and deprive Texas students of a complete, honest education. Faculty—not politicians—need to determine educational topics and students should have the freedom to discuss the topics where they have questions. Such free inquiry has driven higher education and innovation for centuries, and prepares students for the complexities of society and the modern day workforce. SB 37 would gut this educational advantage and destroy Texas's number one position in education and research (having the most R1 and R2 universities in the nation).

Faculty Senates are democratically elected bodies that model our government ideals and ensure the best education. SB 37 would ruin any semblance of democracy in higher ed, making Senates hollow representative bodies, run by the president and muzzled from speaking out. Grievance processes and other procedures would exclude juries of one's peers, dismantling long-standing checks and balances in higher education and infringing on our constitutional rights and due process.

SB 37 does NOT shrink government, it expands it. It will create a massive bureaucracy to micromanage the curriculum for 1.4M degree-seeking students in Texas. Critical decision making is a skill valued across the workforce and its potential lack is already driving the best faculty, researchers, and students out of Texas. It is imperative to keep SB 37 from further destroying the Texas workforce and society.

Jossianna Arroyo-Martinez, Dr
The University of Texas Austin
Austin, TX

The University of Texas is an R-1 institution and the best in the state, as well as ranked as one of the best in the United States. This bill will end academic freedom, freedom in research as well as impact negatively the quality of instruction. Our students are able to impact society because of the way they learn, and the fact that they are able to reflect critically on local, global and international affairs and topics. We are all experts and the best in our respective research areas. Having a board monitor what we do or teach goes against what we do and teach as scholars and instills the idea that learning and knowledge are “dangerous” or questionable. Do not approve this bill.

Sarah Meals
Self
Pearland, TX

Our higher education institutions absolutely must be protected from government encroachment. Academic inquiry and freedom is a pillar of civilization that must be protected if America has a chance of being an intellectual leader. Please protect our universities from this witch trial!

Megan Morrissey
self
Denton, TX

I am writing to ask you to please oppose SB 37. I want Texas to be a state that young people want to come to for a quality education. I want our Texas students to know that they will have an outstanding educational experience at our public universities. Legislation like SB 37 makes this much harder to realize. By reducing faculty involvement in decision-making processes, SB 37 threatens the collaborative model that has historically ensured academic excellence and institutional accountability. Further, granting governing boards the power to veto courses based on perceived ideological bias opens the door to political influence over academic content, compromising educational integrity. It is also the case that limiting faculty's role in curriculum design may jeopardize accreditation status, affecting TEXAS universities' reputations and TEXAS students' access to federal financial aid. This would hurt our state's capacity to draw the best students and best future workforce. Please support our public universities, our students, and the educators working so hard to provide a quality education to our students by voting no on this bill.

Vanita Reddy, Dr.
Self, Professor
Austin, TX

SB 37 violates, unequivocally, the protection of academic freedom in institutions of higher education. Furthermore, this bill would diminish, not amplify, university students' competitiveness in a global marketplace and their chance of becoming global citizens, by allowing for legislative oversight and diminished faculty governance that completely ignores or disavows the facts of history, that withholds knowledge that productively challenges students' understanding of the world they live in, and that promotes provincial and myopic world views rather than global and expansive ones. This bill, at its core, seeks to revoke and punish critical thinking and punish the faculty and universities who cultivate it.

Patrick Smith, Dr.
self university professor and researcher
KIngsbury, TX

My name is Patrick Henry Smith. I am a tenured professor at Texas State University, formerly at University of Texas campuses in Brownsville and El Paso. I am vice president of the Texas Faculty Association and a member of the American Association of University Professors. I am writing for myself as a private citizen and in opposition to SB 37.

My students are studying to become Bilingual and ESL teachers, grades K-6. Our graduates are in demand because bilingual education and ESL are areas of "critical need" in Texas. We absolutely need more bilingual and ESL certified teachers to meet the needs of Texas' children. A second reason our graduates are in demand is that they have been well prepared. They understand the cognitive, linguistic, and social needs of emergent bilingual children and they know how teach them effectively.

This preparation includes talking about issues of language, culture, immigration, race, ethnicity, and other aspects of human diversity that impact learning and teaching. These are issues that future bilingual and ESL teachers are certain to encounter in their careers. We study education policy related to bilingual education like Plyer v. Doe, the 1982 U.S. Supreme Court decision that upholds the decision by Texas Judge William Wayne Justice that all children have a right to a free public K-12 education, regardless of immigration status.
By giving non-professors the authority to stop discussion of these ideas, SB 37 would undermine the quality of my students' university education. It would make them less employable and limit their qualifications for an advanced degree someday. The children they will teach will be negatively affected.

Please vote no.

John Meriwether
self
San Antonio, TX

This is an oppressive piece of legislation that removes the rights of colleges and universities to decide for themselves what is best. It is not about freedom, it is about government control.

Gregory Gonzales
Self
Adkins, TX

I oppose this bill. Texas has had a reputation for excellence in higher education. This bill if passed would do great damage to our great universities.

David Bapst, Dr.
Self
College Station, TX

At Texas A&M, one of the main functions of the Faculty Senate is to distribute information across the university, as there tends to be much more information than can be passed along via the administrators. This means it is ideal if every department has at least one faculty senator, and Texas A&M has more than 90 academic departments by my count. At the moment, we have about 120 faculty senators, but SB 37 would cut the size of our faculty senate to no more than 60, which means many departments would no longer have a faculty senator, and the only way to distribute information would be via department heads (who have other duties and cannot be relied upon to transmit all necessary information from the provost, deans, etc). Furthermore, the senate does a great deal of regulatory busywork for free, so cutting the size of the Senate to half of what it is now would mean the university would have to rely on more administrators to do those tasks (and thus cost more money).

In the same way, I question some of the aspects listed elsewhere in the bill. I think many of the items will add additional regulatory burdens to the university, further adding to the administrative costs of the university. (For example, information on certain courses and programs will now have to be prepared on regular intervals. That information is not currently prepared, so who is going to do it? If you make deans and department heads do it, then they will need to offload other duties they have so they can spend time filling out forms for these new regulatory bodies.) This will, eventually, lead to increases in costs of tuition if not otherwise funded, and proportionally more of that money going to administrative costs rather than the costs of instruction.

I also think the rule about which areas a tenured position can be advertised in without advisory board approval is vague. What counts as liberal arts? Some departments and programs blend 'liberal arts' with hard sciences and engineering fields, are those limited? Etc.

Teresa Klein, Dr.

Self as private citizen - member of Texas AAUP-AFT/Professor of Psychology

Corpus Christi, TX

Please vote no on SB37/HB 4499. The bill is too flawed to not have disastrous consequences. We are already losing faculty and new applications are down significantly for Texas schools. We have had to advertise multiple times just to get an adequate candidate pool for a faculty position in our department. This has never been a problem before. We are getting candidate numbers in the single digits when in the past we were in the triple digits for applicants. We believe this is because of the changes proposed to higher education in Texas.

This bill fails to take into account the diversity of our institutions – at community colleges, we may only have one college at our institution – as is the case in my college. We have Pathways, Divisions, Departments, and Majors. My college is nothing like UT or A&M with all its colleges and schools. This would mean that if the original wording for this bill is used, we would have only one representative on our entire faculty council selected by faculty to represent over 700 people from both credit and workforce sides. I no more understand the needs of welders than they understand the needs of psychologists. We already address this issue by selecting members of the council from a representative group of faculty - we call ours precincts. English selects their representatives from English faculty – that way they can address issues related to the writing lab. Nursing advocates for nursing, Culinary advocates for Culinary and related fields, and so on. We all have different expertise. And a representative selected by "the boss" is not a representative of the faculty no matter how well intentioned.

Another flaw is the lack of specificity in language. How is “liberal arts” defined? There is no standard definition. Would the hiring limits only apply to the liberal arts majors at my college (who receive an AA in Liberal Arts) or are we talking about English, social sciences, and fine arts? I am in the social sciences in my college, and I teach science - psychology. Would psychology be included or will it be called STEM? STEAM? What about interdisciplinary studies?

In any case, it is a bad idea to have people outside the department involved in the hiring of the faculty. In our last advertising for a psychology position, the HR people were happy to prequalify a candidate whose stated qualifications including the ability to do exorcisms – theology? Maybe. Psychology? That is a hard no! Another prequalified candidate included someone using an unproven method of therapy – not a good practice in a science. Faculty must be the main decision makers when hiring other faculty, lab assistants, and graduate assistants. We help avert disasters that could cause the rankings of our already excellent schools to tumble.

Please vote no.

Amy Moore

Self

Austin, TX

I am a Texas resident, taxpayer, and 3 generations of my family have graduated from Texas public universities: Texas Tech, Texas A&M, The University of Texas, Texas State, and West Texas A&M with a range of degrees. I am urging you to oppose SB 37. This bill adds a layer of unelected bureaucracy that micromanages curricula without the pertinent expertise in subject matter nor higher education. Replacing democratically elected faculty senates with unelected bureaucrats will not make our insitutes of higher education stronger. Instead, it will introduce a body that will be subject to the whims of politicians. Texas has always had top-tier universities, please do not silence the esteemed university faculties who bring billions of research dollars into our state and attract the top young Texas minds to further their education in our great state. Please oppose SB 37.

Amy Anderson, Dr.

Self

Lewisville, TX

I am submitting this public comment as a private citizen and resident of Lewisville, Texas. I oppose SB 37. First, the bill creates more government waste. It duplicates procedures already in place at the university system. Additional government overreach is in direct contrast to what the people of Texas want from our state legislature. Second, students should have freedom to choose what to study. SB 37 infantilizes adult student and assumes they’re incapable of forming their own conclusions on course topics. A topic can be analyzed from all viewpoints. Removing a topic prevents that. Please vote NO on SB 37.

Julie Lass
Self, teacher
Austin, TX

I am writing to strongly urge you to vote NO on SB 37, a bill that would seriously damage the integrity and independence of Texas public universities.

SB 37 grants excessive authority to university governing boards, allowing them to interfere in faculty hiring, dictate curriculum changes, and diminish the role of faculty councils. It also establishes vague oversight mechanisms—like a state-run ombudsman office—with the power to investigate institutions in ways that may open the door to political retaliation and censorship.

Faculty should have the freedom to teach. Students should have the freedom to learn. And universities should be governed with a balance of expertise—not centralized political control.

This bill threatens the foundation of higher education: shared governance, academic freedom, and independent thought.

Please stand up for quality education and vote NO on SB 37.

Sincerely,
Julie Lass
78746

Natilee Harren, MRS
self; Associate Professor at University of Houston
Houston, TX

I write as a private citizen regarding SB 37 and how this bill stands to impact my work as an Associate Professor at the University of Houston School of Art. I am a PhD graduate of Rice University and have dedicated my intellectual labors to my field for over 20 years, publishing several books and dozens of articles, and winning numerous top distinctions in my field. Alumni of my program contribute daily to the vibrant arts economy in Houston, which generates over $1.3 billion in economic activity annually and supports over 21,000 jobs. I have served as Faculty Senate Member of the Research and Scholarship Committee, where I collaborated with faculty across all fields to review applications for small research grants ranging from $5,000-$40,000 and attended monthly meetings of the entire Senate body and reported information back to my colleagues in the College of the Arts.

Faculty Senates conduct unglamorous workaday administration that the university simply could not afford to hire or legislate out to other bodies who don’t have the particular knowledge and embeddedness in the day-to-day operations of the institution. There is nothing conspiratorial or ideological about our work. With direct knowledge of student needs and cutting-edge research in our respective fields, we help the university run, with an eye toward best practices in our disciplines. The Faculty Senate is a means of communication and dialogue between the faculty and administration around our shared investment in the university as an institution of advanced learning and career preparation. Our relationship is wholly collaborative, not confrontational. Adding layers of bureaucracy via overseeing boards would be redundant to the systems of oversight that are already in place. Each semester, as required by state law, I upload my syllabi and current CV to a publicly accessible registry. It seems to me that the transparency the bill seeks is already in place.

If this cumbersome and meddlesome oversight bill is passed, our campuses will continue to lose talented faculty and students and find it more difficult to attract the best candidates. In a 2024 AAUP survey, 28% of Texas faculty said they had interviewed elsewhere since 2022. The top issue grounding a desire to leave is the state’s political climate (48.6%) followed by anxieties about academic freedom (46.3%) and salary (42.8%). Among respondents, more than 45% said they knew of faculty who had refused positions offered at their campus, due to tenure policy changes and political attacks on higher education. SB37 is the worst such attack I have seen in my 10 years working as an educator in Texas. Texas is already out of line with AAUP standards regarding tenure and academic freedom. The proposed bill denies faculty expertise, tramples on the freedom of students and faculty to learn, teach, and research in innovative ways, and introduces compliance strain in an already under-resourced learning environment.

Nneoma Onochie
Self - Student
Austin, TX

As a student studying Computer Science at UT Austin, taking global cultural classes, especially those highlighted about identity, has been so important in ensuring that the code I create is ethical and does not harm people, especially those who are underrepresented or marginalized through their income or identity. Take Asian American Jurisprudence taught me about Asian American history that I never learned in high school, which made me learn about the issues Asian Americans face, which is extremely important as I enter the tech industry which has a lot of Asian workers, helping me connect better with my classmates and future coworkers. These cultural classes do NOT uphold one ideal over the other, or teach anything about how being white or being a man is wrong. They teach about culture from different lenses and call for students to think critically about the world as they see them. Many students have never interacted with someone outside of their race or socioeconomic class, so learning about differences in Americans can help them build better relations and have better empathy about people who are dissimilar to them. In my machine learning class, we learned about how computer science and machine learning algorithms have been used in the past to cause bigger rights among socioeconomic status, like how Meta used machine learning to not show Black users housing options in affluent neighborhoods, regardless of that users' socioeconomic status. Despite Mega being punished by the DOJ for doing so, they have still continued to do so. As I enter a field with a lot of power to shape the world, I want to ensure that it benefits everyone and doesn't leave people to be forgotten. These cultural diversity perspectives ensure that I am doing my best to enable everyone to be able to rise and be their best selves.

Tanuke Smitth, Executive Director
Texas Federation of The People Foundation
Houston, TX

This is not freedom. Education is the keys to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This is a total violation of the constitution. This bill will set back children for generations to come. Let's elevate of future, don't pass this bill.

Ruth Falck, Ms.
self/retired school superintendent
Corpus Christi, TX

I am a mother, a grandmother, and a retired school superintendent. I retired to Texas because of its people, the nice beaches, and the excellent communities. I was disturbed, however, when I heard about SB 37. I ask you to vote no on SB 37/HB4499. It seems like it is a bad deal for Texas. I was in charge of hiring at my schools at the K-12 level, and I listened to my teachers to assess their needs. I made the final decision but the input of the teachers was invaluable. They might spot things that I missed or know something about the person that I didn't know. This bill cuts out the voices of the teachers, those people we most needed to hear from when hiring. Not only is it a good idea to have them involved in the assessment of whether the person is qualified or not, but it helped us with team building in that we were able to determine if they could work together or not. It is different in the K-12 system. It is easier to find qualified people with a bachelor's degree than it is with master's degrees or doctorates. Colleges and Universities must have higher standards. Hiring a professor isn't like hiring an admin assistant or a paraprofessional. It is a long-term commitment to an instructor and a researcher. It is best practices to hire with all the input possible and to have the faculty with whom they will work as part of the team making that decision. As written, this bill ignores the best practices and bypasses those with the greatest expertise. Please vote no.

Nancy Flores
self
Austin, TX

Education should be handled and decided by educators, not politicians. Micromanaging by elected officials has no place in higher education.

Annelise Heffley
Self
Denton, TX

As a Texan and an advocate of higher education, I strongly OPPOSE SB 37. Limiting faculty's role in curriculum design may jeopardize accreditation status, affecting TEXAS universities' reputations and TEXAS students' access to federal financial aid. This would hurt our state's capacity to draw the best students and best future workforce. Please do right by all Texans and OPPOSE SB 37.

Jessie Casteel
self/teacher
Houston, TX

Hello, my name is Jessie Casteel. I am a Lecturer of English at University of Houston Downtown, but I am speaking here as a private individual. I write to express my strong opposition to SB 37, a bill that would be devastating to higher education in Texas. Texas' Higher Education institutions offer world class, quality education that draws in students from around the country and the globe. Our 22 ranked HEIs are in the top 2.5% of the world's 25,000 universities. We have not achieved this extraordinary success by government interference, censorship, and micromanagement from non-experts - the very policies that hamstring the higher education policies of our global competitors. We have already seen the outcomes of similar policies in the deterioration of our K-12 education, where they have driven out our most talented and dedicated educators, eroded our students' critical thinking skills and engagement, and narrowed the curriculum so far as to impede our students' ability to compete in higher education. I therefore urge the House Higher Ed Committee to oppose SB37 for the sake of freedom, education, and our ability to continue to produce successful students.

Nicholas Little, Criminal Justice Chairman
NAACP
Houston, TX

Members, I respectfully request that you consider what's at stake here. Quality and equity in education are key. Facts are just that. We need not milk down the education system to satisfy partisanship or personal interests. Education is a divine right that should be granted to everyone. I hope you all will seek to save and preserve it, rather than hold future education hostage. Education is fundamental no matter or is getting access or where it's being assessed.

Patrick Gilbert
Self - Educator
Brenham, TX

I disagree with SB 37. It erodes the curriculum responsibilities of the colleges and universities, and places far too much power in the hands of the governing bodies. In class, we teach students the facts. It is then up to them how they wish to use the information. Let's stop unnecessary legislation such as this.

Idona Griffith
Retired Teacher
Austin, TX

State government has NO BUSINESS reviewing and/or establishing curricula for our colleges and universities. This is the SOLE RESPONSIBILITY of the professors and educators who are trained for and charged with actually TEACHING our students. Period!

Cathy Guttentag
Self
Houston, TX

I am strongly OPPOSED to this bill that would allow the state vast control over higher ed institutions in Texas. Colleges and universities should free to control their own curricula without censorship and unfettered power over hiring and firing. Higher ed institutions are for teaching students to learn how to think critically, be exposed to multiple perspectives on complex issues, learning from professors who dedicate their lives to becoming experts in their subject matter areas and helping students to expand their knowledge and thinking skills. Colleges and universities should never be places of indoctrination and governmental limits. We are not China or North Korea or Russia. We are the United States of America, where students are free to learn and be exposed to intellectual knowledge and discourse. This bill smacks of authoritarian government over-reach and should NOT pass.

Maria Person
self, Director
Austin, TX

Please oppose SB 37. This is political interference in the functioning of state universities. Mechanisms are in place within the universities to review and evaluate programs.

Gina Mateer
Self
Austin, TX

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 37, which would give the state broad and unprecedented control over the curriculum and degree programs offered by Texas public universities.

SB 37 represents a fundamental threat to academic freedom and the integrity of higher education in our state. It proposes shifting the authority to approve, alter, or eliminate academic programs from educators and subject matter experts to state-level political appointees. This undermines institutional autonomy, stifles innovation, and invites ideological interference into decisions that should remain grounded in educational value and workforce relevance.

I oppose SB 37 for the following key reasons:

- Erosion of Academic Freedom: University faculty and academic leaders—experts in their fields—are best positioned to develop curricula and programs that prepare students for a rapidly changing world. Politicizing these decisions risks reducing education to ideological conformity.
- Damage to Institutional Autonomy: Texas universities have built strong national and global reputations based on their ability to self-govern academically. Centralizing control in Austin undercuts local governance, accreditation standards, and long-term strategic planning.
- Threat to Innovation and Workforce Alignment: Modern academic programs must respond quickly to emerging fields, research advances, and employer needs. Delays or denials imposed by the state could leave Texas behind in vital sectors like healthcare, engineering, climate science, and artificial intelligence.
- Precedent for Political Overreach: If the state can dictate what programs can and cannot be taught, we risk turning our universities into political instruments rather than centers of learning, inquiry, and critical thought.

In a time when Texas should be leading in education, research, and workforce development, SB 37 sends the wrong message to students, faculty, and employers: that politics—not educational merit—will determine what knowledge is valued and supported in our institutions.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 37 and preserve the independence and excellence of Texas higher education.

Melissa Totah
Austin Community College
Austin, TX

Dear Members of the House Higher Education Committee,

As a proud employee of Austin Community College, I am writing to express my unequivocal opposition to Senate Bill 37. This sweeping legislation represents an unprecedented and dangerous overreach into the governance of our state's public colleges and universities. If passed, SB 37 will fundamentally and permanently undermine the quality, autonomy, and national reputation of Texas higher education.

SB 37 proposes a radical restructuring of our entire public higher education system by giving unprecedented authority to politically appointed officials. These individuals, answerable not to students, educators, or communities, would gain broad power over curriculum decisions, faculty hiring, grievance procedures, and more. This top-down, partisan model not only threatens academic freedom, but also dismantles the carefully balanced system of shared governance that has allowed Texas institutions to thrive.

Our universities and colleges have earned global recognition precisely because faculty are empowered to teach, research, and innovate without fear of political interference. SB 37 would stifle that freedom, especially with its restrictions on discussing race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and other essential components of a comprehensive education. These limitations run counter to the values of critical thinking, open inquiry, and intellectual growth that define higher education.

The bill also targets liberal arts disciplines and proposes defunding or punishing institutions that do not comply. This punitive approach disregards the diverse academic needs of students and ignores the workforce demands for graduates who are strong communicators, critical thinkers, and adaptable leaders. Our state's future depends on a well-rounded, well-educated population — not one shaped by narrow political agendas.

SB 37 sends a chilling message to educators and students alike: that political power, not academic integrity, will shape the future of our colleges and universities. It undermines due process for faculty and threatens institutional accreditation, recruitment, and retention of talent. It risks making Texas a cautionary tale in the national landscape of higher education.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 37. Protect our colleges and universities from permanent state takeover. Uphold the principles of academic freedom, local governance, and educational excellence that have made Texas a leader in higher education.

Sincerely,
Melissa Victor Totah
Transformative Interventions Programs Manager
Austin Community College
Austin, TX

Karla Hernandez-Swift, Dr
private Texas citizen
San Marcos, TX

My name is Dr. Karla Hernandez-Swift, I teach at a Texas public university and a U.S. Army veteran, and wife of a retired veteran. I strongly oppose Texas Senate Bill 37. This bill threatens the academic freedom essential to higher education by placing curriculum decisions in the hands of a politically appointed committee with no requirement for faculty, student, or administrator representation. Such oversight undermines the expertise of educators and risks censoring honest discussions about the diverse realities that shape our society.
I did not enlist in this country to see the freedoms I defended-especially the freedom of speech-suppressed in our classrooms. SB 37 would allow anyone to file complaints that could jeopardize university funding, creating a catastrophic effect on teaching and open dialogue. I implore you to see the long-term negative effects of this bill.
SB 37 would strip faculty, the subject matter experts, of their essential role in shaping curriculum and university policy, handing unprecedented power to unelected state bureaucrats and political appointees. By limiting faculty voices on governing bodies and allowing the arbitrary closure of academic programs, the bill threatens the diversity and quality of educational offerings available to our students., I am deeply troubled by any effort to suppress open inquiry and critical thinking-values that are foundational to both higher education and a thriving democracy.
The bill's vague prohibitions on teaching topics like gender, race, or "identity politics" will force faculty to self-censor, depriving students of the opportunity to engage with complex ideas and diverse perspectives. This effect will weaken the quality of education, hinder workforce preparation, and drive talented educators and researchers away from Texas. Our students deserve an education that prepares them for leadership in a global, multicultural society.
I urge lawmakers to reject this bill and instead support policies that empower educators, foster intellectual curiosity, and keep Texas a leader in higher education.

Laura Hernandez-Ehrisman, Dr.
self
Austin, TX

My name is Dr. Laura Hernandez-Ehrisman. I am a faculty member at the University of Texas at Austin, but I am speaking as a private citizen, not as a representative of any institution. I am writing to voice my strong opposition to SB37. I have been a college educator for over 20 years. This bill would severely limit my ability to teach my classes. I allow my students to freely explore controversial issues and concepts, and this bill would censor what we can discuss. Faculty—not politicians—should determine what topics are covered in college classrooms and students should have the freedom to discuss these topics. Just last semester a former student told me that one of the things he liked best about my class was that he felt free to disagree with students who had different perspectives. As an educator, I take pride in my ability to invite my students to explore the complexities of various controversial topics. My students are bright, intellectually curious, and are fully capable of forming their own opinions on critical issues—I just offer them a space to do so.
I am also reaching out as a parent of a soon-to-be student at a Texas public university. My child deserves the same high-quality education that I received as a public university student in this state. This bill would reduce the value of my child's degree, which could have a significant impact on her ability to get a good job after college. SB 37 will drive away top faculty, researchers, and administrators who don't want their work micromanaged by the government. And our best and brightest students will follow them.
SB 37 is an outrageous power grab that replaces shared governance with political control, and it does so in the so-called effort to assure quality and high return on investment, but what is the ROI of this effort? The bill promotes big, wasteful government. and would have the state invest millions of dollars to create a massive bureaucracy to replicate what institutions already do. In 1883 the University of Texas at Austin was established to fulfill the promise of the Texas Constitution, that "The Legislature shall as soon as practicable establish, organize and provide for the maintenance, support and direction of a University of the first class." Today Texas has the most top tier research universities in the country, but this bill would dismantle over 140 years of this progress. I urge you to remember the legacy and the vision of our early state legislators and vote NO on SB 37.

Marco Cervantes
myself
San Antonio, TX

I am speaking as a private citizen. As a product of the Texas K-12 and Texas college and university systems and a veteran of the US Army, whose father and grandfather also served in the US Army, I maintain that SB37 will bring harm to our Mexican American communities and Texas communities at large. Most of the history I received in my K-12 did not educate me on the important contributions of Mexican American people to the state of Texas. It was not until I took classes in African American Literature and Mexican American Literature in higher education that I began to understand the strong impact both African Americans and Mexican Americans have made on Texas culture, history, and politics. Today, I teach courses in Mexican American Studies with a focus on music and culture. This includes the rich history of corridos, orchestra, and Tejano music. This has also involved teaching how Mexican Americans drew inspiration from African American, German, and Scottish people, to name a few, in the creation of these genres. These are histories that reveal connections among different groups in Texas. Every semester, former students let me know how these courses have helped them to navigate their careers where there are multiplicities of people and identities. Enacting SB37 would stand in the way of letting our students and communities understand the complexities of our histories and will continue to create a climate of misunderstandings and conflict.

Susanna Sharpe, Ms.
Self, Writer/Editor and Musician
AUSTIN, TX

I am the proud parent of two alumni of the University of Texas at Austin. I oppose SB 37 with every fiber of my being. The quality of education available at public universities in Texas is exceptionally high. At these institutions, some of the best-trained academics in all fields make available a wide range of intellectual, scientific, cultural, and philosophical thought to students. One of the things these educators do is to train students to develop their own ideas, criticism, analysis—by teaching critical thinking. We must not censor educators and students, whose job it is to explore ideas without fear, to have open conversations about ideas and philosophies of all kind, to examine the ideas and practices in their chosen field of study—whether it be history or science or anthropology or business or mathematics—in an environment that invites curiosity, debate, and discovery. I urge you to vote NO on SB 37!

Rolf Straubhaar, Dr.
Self, Professor of Education
San Marcos, TX

I teach in several programs that prepare future K-12 educational leaders, assistant principals, principals, and superintendents. I have done this work for 8 years, and our program has well-known and well-regarded alumni working in districts throughout the state.

We have assessed and asked our alumni which of our courses had the strongest and most powerful impact on their work. They consistently talk about courses in which we talk at length about many of the topics SB 37 will prospectively restrict—discussions of race and ethnicity, sexual identity, and other aspects of their lives that shape the leaders that they are and the schools in which they work. Those are the courses our alumni most appreciate and most highlight when asked, and that feedback has been consistent for years.

If this bill passes, with the forms of curricular oversight it puts in place, our K-12 schools will have leaders who are less well equipped to help their students and teachers perform their best. This bill kneecaps our public universities, and through programs like the ones in which I teach, it will also hurt our public K-12 schools.

I am opposed to this bill, and ask you to vote against it.

Rolf Straubhaar, Dr.
Self, Professor of Education
San Marcos, TX

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I am opposed to this bill, and ask you to vote against it.

Lucas Espinoza, Dr.
Self
McAllen, TX

SB 37 represents a dangerous overreach into the internal governance of Texas universities and would severely undermine the ability of institutions to foster inclusive, evidence-based environments for teaching, research, and student support. By targeting initiatives — many of which support veterans, first-generation college students, students with disabilities, and students from underrepresented backgrounds — this bill threatens to dismantle the very structures that ensure access and success for all Texans. This will drive away top faculty and researchers, who increasingly seek environments that value academic freedom and institutional autonomy. It will also jeopardize federal research funding, much of which depends on demonstrated commitments to equity and compliance with civil rights regulations. As well as it will compromise student wellbeing and retention, especially at Hispanic-Serving Institutions like mine, where culturally responsive support systems are vital for student success. I urge you to reject SB 37 and instead support policies that strengthen our commitment to educational excellence and innovation of a faculty and students.

Kristy Money, Dr.
Self, Psychologist
San Marcos, TX

I am a psychologist who provides therapy and psychological assessments to clients through a private practice here in Texas. I am also a parent of five children who plan to attend public universities in Texas when they graduate from the K-12 system.

When I think back on my own training as a psychologist, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, many important courses that help me effectively serve my clients are ones that would potentially be censored or restricted under SB 37. I am a white woman, but most of my clients do not share that identity--if it were not for my training, I would not know how to best provide services that fit their needs. If courses in Texas public universities can't address those topics, it will be mean people like me will not be able to do our jobs.

Also, given the beautifully multicultural society in which we live in Texas, I hope that my children will have the chance to take courses that help them understand the people and cultures around them, particularly those of people who are not like them and with which they are not already familiar. SB 37 could take away those courses, and make my children's education the poorer for it.

I am opposed to this bill, and ask you to vote against it.

Tamika Baldwin-Clark
Self/Edicator
CYPRESS, TX

I am strongly against this preposterous bill. Please stop with the madness at once. Thank you.

Evangeline Straubhaar
Self, High School Student
San Marcos, TX

I live and go to school in San Marcos, Texas. I am starting high school next year. I made the varsity dance team and am excited to be in theater productions like I've done while in middle school.

I am from Texas and proud to be from Texas--but if this bill passes, I don't think I will consider going to college in Texas. I have friends who are gay, friends who are trans, friends who are not white, friends who represent all the categories this bill doesn't think college courses should talk about. We all have rights. We have the right to be represented and learn about all different kinds of people in our courses. I want to attend college at a place that isn't afraid, where politicians don't censor what I can and can't learn.

I oppose this bill. Please vote against it.

Claudia Alejandra Elenes
self
San Antonio, TX

My name is Claudia Alejandra Elenes. I have over 30 years' experience in higher education, the last five years in Texas. I write as a citizen representing only myself. I am writing in opposition to SB 37. I oppose this bill because it will restrict the free expression and discussions of ideas and censor critical thought limiting discussions of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, religion, and social beliefs; dismantles academic faculty governance; and impose an unwieldly bureaucratic system that will not allow higher education institutions to operate in an efficient manner. The State of Texas has some of the finest institutions of higher education in the United States with an excellent national and international reputation. SB 37 will have negative repercussions to generations of Texas students.
I have been a faculty member in the humanities, social sciences, and education with specializations in women's gender and sexuality and ethnic studies. In this capacity I have mentored hundreds of students and taught thousands. My former students have thriving careers in education, public sector (including a former state senator), non-profit, and advocacy. One recent graduate is working at the Bexar County Juvenile Detention; another is pursuing a graduate degree to become an archivist. These individuals are successful in their careers and in continuing their education because they received a first-rate education that allowed them to explore critical analysis of society from multiple perspectives. These experiences, in turn, allowed them to engage in external and internal reflection. The ability to look at a problem through a variety of lenses, has provided students with critical thinking and communication skills necessary to secure employment. Students are able to understand rich historical information and disentangle this information to apply it to understand an everchanging society. As a women's gender and sexuality studies professor, I have dealt with students' skepticism about the curriculum and coursework. Once students take these courses, they find a place where they can put to work their passions and engage in an open, rich and free exchange of ideas that makes everyone grow personally and intellectually.
For these reasons, I oppose SB 37. A prosperous Texas depends on strong universities and strong universities need academic freedom, faculty governance, and institutional independence.

Rosemary Straubhaar
Self, Middle School Student
San Marcos, TX

Hi. I am a 6th grader in San Marcos. I play on the volleyball team and am really active in theater at my middle school.

I am really looking forward to when I go to college. My parents both teach college courses, and when they talk about their classes and what books their students are reading and the discussions they are having, I get excited about doing that, too. Unfortunately we don't get to have very deep discussions in my middle school classes--we are mostly focused on STAAR all the time. I really look forward to classes where we can talk about big ideas and read interesting books.

If this bill passes, there will be less of that here in Texas, and I probably won't go to college here. I want to go somewhere where people picked by the governor get to decide what books I get to read in college. In college, I'll be an adult--if you vote for this bill, you're saying you don't want to treat me like one.

I oppose this bill. Please vote against it.

Margaret Kallsen
self (retired - progammer analyst)
Houston, TX

Please do not pass SB37. I support academic freedom that acknowledges our full history of successes and short-comings and that will make us a stronger nation going forward.

David Shontz
Self-retired
SPRING, TX

I want Texas higher education to be respected around the country. This bill inserts politicians into decisions where they have no background or expertise, turning college education into a watered down waste or an active propaganda channel. Yet another bureaucracy to be created by our supposed “small government” state.

Sean Price
Self
Austin, TX

I'm writing to oppose this bill. It would give the state unprecedented power to meddle in the affairs of colleges and universities. State officials have no business trying to influence either curriculum or hiring decisions made by officials in higher education. Allowing this will destroy the state's enviable leadership in science, business, liberal arts, and other disciplines. In the long run, that will hurt the state economically because it will make the state less attractive to businesses that rely on academia as a partner and a source of employees. Even talk of this bill has launched a brain drain at top universities, and those departures will accelerate if the bill passes. Please kill this bill.

Tracy Cornelius
self / homemaker
Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. College students in Texas are capable of confronting new and challenging ideas. It is not appropriate for board members to prevent professors from teaching about certain topics they might disagree with. I am concerned that if this bill passes, students will learn less about the world. I am concerned that our universities will not be able to continue to attract top talent if this bill passes. I am also opposed to the way this bill could create a way to file complaints about universities that threaten their funding.

Sean Skipworth
Self. College Professor
Dickinson, TX

One of the aspects of this bill that I haven't seen addressed much thus far concerns the specificity laid out concerning faculty senate composition. As a community college professor, I can state that the requirements laid out would be extremely cumbersome and in some cases community colleges would be unable to comply. As written, the bill requires faculty senate members to be tenured faculty members. However, many community colleges do not have tenure at all or have systems where some faculty members are tenured and others are not. As written, such institutions would be unable to have faculty senates as they have no tenured faculty at all. The term limits laid out would also create problems, particularly for smaller community colleges, as they do not have faculty bodies of sufficient size to comply with the term limit requirements. Other requirements, such as having the college president select faculty senate officers, feel like overreach. The bill requires faculty senates to be advisory as is (and most community college faculty senates already operate this way.) I am not certain as to the rationale behind not allowing the faculty themselves to select their officers, particularly when they have no statutory authority over decision making. I have similar concerns regarding requiring public agenda posting requirements and requiring faculty senate meetings to be publicly streamed. The bill requires a seven day public posting requirement. The public is rarely going to be interested the mundane issues faculty senates are asked by college administration to weigh in on. I'd also point out that it seems strange that the Texas Open Meetings Act allows the elected governing board of a college a 72 hour notice period, but the faculty senate is required to adhere to a seven day notice. Similarly, local governments are not required to steam their proceedings, but mundane faculty senate meetings would be required to do so under this bill. Faculty need some venue in which to voice concerns and speak frankly on matters and requiring all meetings to be streamed will severely curtail discussion of matters of workplace concern.

I am concerned about other aspects of this bill as well, but I wanted to highlight this area that has not received a great deal of discussion. I would submit that the micromanagement of faculty senate elections presented in this bill should be eliminated for all institutions, but at minimum should separate out community college senates as our faculty composition is very different than those at four year institutions.

Keith McNeal
self
Houston, TX

I’m Dr Keith McNeal, an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Houston, and I’m speaking as a private individual. I oppose SB37 in all forms.

I am a specialist on the anthropology and history of the Caribbean and I happen to be good at what I do, so I was recruited by the premier research university in the English-speaking Caribbean as a visiting professor and just spent an amazing couple of years there teaching Caribbean students and pursuing my research and filmmaking. The University of the West Indies wanted me to stay on permanently, but I decided to return to UH because I appreciate teaching American students as an American citizen and I adore my UH students. I could have stayed in the Caribbean, which frankly would have been better for my research and career. But now if SB37 becomes law, then I will regret my decision to return. I never dreamed I might teach in the sort of draconian environment envisioned by SB37.

I also want to share with you something from class discussion in my course on the Caribbean this semester. We did a unit on Cuba and my students were horrified to learn about the intellectual repression and lack of academic freedom under the Communist Cuban regime. Then, toward the end of discussion one day last month, a student asked, “is this where Texas is heading?” Another student quickly seconded the question. So I want to ask how you would answer that question? Is that where Texas is heading? It’s in your hands.

Sara Fernandez, Mrs
Self
Houston, TX

Education institutions must teach the facts, the truth of our history and contemporary society. It is by knowing the truth that we can aspire to greatness. History is a tool for learning and making better decisions.

Laura Gallier
Self-retired CPA
Houston, TX

Oppose SB37. My goodness, the presentation of this bill by Rep Shaheen sure did not seem like the bill I read. No mention of the stated intention of the author, Senator Creighton, to get "woke ideology", "gender ideology" and "distorted history" out the the university. Distorted history is actually what I was taught back in the early 1980s - there was no mention of what was going on with anyone who was not white or male or straight. I was always curious about this, and now that I'm retired, I'm learning about it. I feel cheated that I was taught a "distorted history" that excluded the specific histories of women, children, Native Americans, LGBTQ people, African Americans. We weren't all doing the same things straight white men were doing - because many of us couldn't. So to leave us out of history was a terrible, cruel distortion. We must not go back to that. But to hear Rep Shaheen make no mention of Creighton's express intention to downplay histories other than his, that is also a distortion. I'm grateful for the courageous testimony of the university professors who understand what it's like to be censored and be unable to meet the demands of the curiosity of their students. The people who support this bill claim to want to not waste government money - they created a Texas DOGE for that express purpose, yet they want to create this huge new bureaucracy to police academic thought. Oppose this bill, and make the people supporting it tell the truth about why they really support it.

Sandra Gavrilla
self-retired
Coppell, TX

I oppose this bill because it threatens academic freedom, stripping faculty senates of meaningful influence over curriculum development, hiring, and academic policy. It also consolidates power under governor-appointed boards of regents, sidelining subject-matter experts in favor of political appointees. The bill poses a threat to academic freedom and curriculum integrity. It states that university courses must not "endorse specific public policies, ideologies or legislation" - a statement that is dangerously vague and could minimize classroom discussions on topics like constitutional interpretation or civil rights, violating First Amendment protections. This bill certainly could jeopardize accreditation which could drive attendance down and threaten institutional financial stability. And it could deter top scholars from working in Texas, further weakening our public universities and harming our economy. This bill ultimately would centralize control over Texas public universities in politically appointed boards, marginalizing faculty expertise and threatening the quality, independence, and national standing of higher education in this state. please vote no!

Rohith Raman, Mr.
The University of Texas at Dallas
Richardson, TX

Against the bill. Very tumultuous bill.

Maria Cotera
University of Texas - Austin
Austin, TX

If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.
In 2020 I left my job at the University of Michigan to join the University of Texas faculty. At the time, some colleagues questioned my decision since I was giving up a good job at a top university (Michigan is ranked #3 in public universities) for what they perceived to be a lesser institution, but I knew better. I was drawn to UT for several reasons. First, UT had committed resources to building a prestigious Latino Studies program that was attracting some of the top scholars in the US and I knew that it had the potential to become a national leader in the field. Second, UT had recently become an Hispanic Serving Institution, and thus offered me the opportunity to teach Latino Studies some of the brightest and most promising students in a state. In October of 2020, the university was just one of five to receive the prestigious Seal of Excelencia, which is granted to a small group of colleges and universities committed to accelerating Latino student success. UT had also been steadily moving up in the college rankings, from the low 40s in 2010 to the low 30s in 2020. It was clearly on an upward trajectory. Today UT ranks #7 among public universities and has the potential to compete with much more prestigious institutions like UCLA, Berkeley and Michigan (currently ranked 1,2,3). Those top public institutions maintain a strong separation between the university and the state legislature in order to ensure that politics do not infect the free exchange of ideas that is so central to a world-class university. Unfortunately, politicians in Texas don’t understand how important such a separation is to our credibility as a non-partisan institution of higher learning. Their political meddling is actively undermining the efforts of university leaders, administrators, staff and faculty to make UT the number 1 public university in the nation.
Furthermore, Americans don’t like big government messing with their universities. In a new poll, 49% agree that “no government — regardless of which party is in power — should dictate what universities can teach, whom they can admit and hire, and which areas of study and inquiry they can pursue." This was born out right here in Texas where elections in towns across the state rejected the extremist and anti-American takeover of our public schools. The university is not a political football to be played with carelessly, and we are not on opposing teams! We all want the same thing: to make UT the best public university in the world. I believed in the promise of UT when I came here, and I gave up a position at a higher ranked institution because of that faith. But we simply cannot be the best public university in the nation if we allow political appointees with little experience in higher education to take control. SB37 is a bad bill that will only hurt our reputation and roll back the progress we have made thus far.

Marina Coryat, Rev.
HAUL
Houston, TX

This SB37 undermines our constitutional freedom to choose how we choose to learn. The beautiful thing about education is that it broadens horizons and perspectives. Limiting access and what and how it is taught, short changes individuals and those who attend educational institutions from gaining an enriched experience.Please preserve our civil liberties by opposing this bill or leaving it in committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jenny Brown
Self
Canadian, TX

SB 37 is a hostile takeover of Texas higher education.

It hands unprecedented power to politically appointed boards to override faculty, censor curricula, and micromanage hiring decisions. It undermines shared governance, academic freedom, and the mission of public universities to educate—not just train workers.

?? Faculty, not politicians, should shape education.
?? Campuses need freedom to think, not fear.
Protect Academic Freedom and University INTEGRITY.

Judith Coffin
self
AUSTIN, TX

My name is Judy Coffin. I speak for myself as a private citizen. I also speak from experience of decades working in one private and two public universities as a professor of history. I am opposed to SB37. It fundamentally misconstrues and even distorts the content of liberal arts courses, how our work is evaluated, and the layers of oversight already in place.

I've taught in the Normandy Scholars program on the Second World War. It is 5 different courses on the US, Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Vichy France, and Poland. The program is routinely described as "transformative" and "life changing." Among its central themes are antisemitism in all its manifestations, the rise and then defeat of Nazism, the conditions under which republics survive or collapse and the changing national memories of the war. None of these issues, among the most consequential of the 20th century, lend themselves to indoctrination. To "endorse an ideology" in this context would be meaningless. To the contrary: helping students navigate this maze requires very deep historical expertise, knowledge of archives, reading hundreds of books with different and often contradictory interpretations, and not least, attentiveness to how young adults will contend with a history shot through with murderous violence and dilemmas that were at once national and personal, strategic and ethical. This is what it means to teach in the liberal arts.

Another example of routine practice: when I teach the French Revolution I assign students to political clubs across the spectrum from conservative to republican. They debate, write newspapers and immerse themselves in different political positions. They make arguments and counter arguments and learn to think about steering through moments of deep political uncertainty.

Such work at a high level makes for a great public university. The skills and knowledge our students acquire send them on to the best medical, business, public policy, and law schools in the country and to careers in the private and public sectors.

Let me emphasize how carefully our courses are monitored. Students evaluate every course. So do our peers. Their judgments weigh heavily in annual review, tenure and promotion. I sit on the advisory committee for the Plan II interdisciplinary honors program. On that committee we scrutinize the syllabi for every proposed course and the evaluations for every professor.

I have loved my years teaching in first-rate public universities. But the prospect of another layer of oversight, and from the government, is profoundly disheartening. Already any new course must pass the department, the dean, the Tower, and the Texas board of Higher Ed. Tha process takes more than a year and it won't be taught for another year. The proposed expanded bureaucracy is redundant, expensive, inefficient, and stifling.

The university flourishes as free thought, rigorous investigation, and intellectual independence. We need our reps to defend that tradition.

Mariela Nuñez-Janes, Dr.
Self, Professor
Denton, TX

My name is Mariela Nuñez-Janes and I oppose SB 37. I am a Professor of anthropology at a public Texas university but I am writing as a private citizen. The control that this bill gives to political appointees to decide what students can learn in classes and what courses count towards the core curriculum will target what I teach and the academic programs I am a part of. I am concerned that if SB 37 becomes law students' freedom of choice will be undermined and faculty will no longer have the freedom to teach about our expertise.

When I started college anthropology was not my intended major. I took my first anthropology class because I had a choice of courses that could fulfill a university requirement. This choice allowed me to find a major that I loved and ultimately led me to secure a professional path. Today many of my students who choose anthropology do so because they can select an anthropology class for their core requirements. One of the undergraduate classes I teach, Latinos in the U.S, allows students the choice to use the class towards their anthropology major, core curriculum requirements, and/or Latino/a Mexican-American Studies major or certificate. The opportunity to choose from a variety of classes helps students feel excited about their education. Just last week one student emailed me to tell me that my class inspired him to take another summer class in anthropology this time focusing on indigenous peoples and Native Americans.

Placing curricular decisions on the hands of political appointees takes away students' freedom of choice and faculty's freedom to teach. This will hurt students' academic success and faculty like me who teach classes in the social sciences and liberal arts fields targeted by SB 37. Students' academic choices are already supported by advising and mentorship from faculty and staff. Their academic success requires collaboration by working one on one with students. Academic course schedules are planned in advance by faculty and staff committees so that courses are taught and students can complete graduation requirements. Political appointees do not have this knowledge and they should not be burdened with tasks that are already being done by faculty and accomplished through existing university institutional mechanisms. Giving the ability to control curriculum to political appointees with little to no knowledge of course content, students, and curricular infrastructure will affect students' choices and hurt their ability to graduate.

As I finish this semester, I wonder if this is the last time after 22 years at my university that I teach the Latinos in the U.S. class. I think about the future of the majors and certificates that my class contributes to. I worry about the loss of research and community engagement opportunities that my class offers. Most importantly I think about my students' freedom of choice and their ability to be inspired academically like I was many years ago when I found anthropology.

Linda White
Self
Missouri City, TX

This Bill threatens higher education and students freedoms. Politics should not restrict college curriculum discussion on race, ethnicity, sex, religion, or social belief. You all had all these rights when you were in college. When did we become a dictator society? We live in the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. The land of the free!

Kevin Gillespie
Self
Austin, TX

My name is Kevin Gillespie. I moved to Texas 33 years ago and am a former Texas public school teacher. I am now a regular student earning straight As at Texas State University and at Austin Community College.

As someone long involved in caring about Texas schools, I am concerned about the consequences that passing SB37 will have. The legislation will negatively impact our state's reputation, the efficiency of our higher educational system, our competitiveness for talent among states, and our state's economic prospects. I urge you to vote NO on the bill.

In a time when the federal government is putting enormous emphasis on efficiency in government, the legislature in Texas is proposing to promote inefficiency within our higher educational system. Shocking! Higher Education already has enough oversight through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Boards of Regents and the Boards of Trustees. Adding another office for overseeing higher education, duplicating infrastructure that already exists, will only add to inefficiency in the system.

I am also concerned about state appointed bureaucrats making all decisions regarding curriculum and education. They cannot replace the knowledge of our college and university professors gained through years of study and experience. It is through their efforts that Texas has such well respected universities and so many R1 and R2 institutions.

The changes advocated by SB37 will not only compromise the reputation of Texas colleges and universities, but also weaken the value for students of Texas higher education degrees, and put at risk the long-term competitiveness of Texas schools and businesses, too. Texas will be sending out the message to look elsewhere if you want a top-quality education with a valued reputation. Our best students will go elsewhere to college. The highest caliber educators and researchers will seek jobs in other states, not Texas. As a result, lesser-quality candidates will fill educator and researcher higher education positions.

Moreover, corporations will decide not to come here. Those already here may consider moving. Decision making by bureaucrats and the loss of talent at our universities will stifle cutting-edge knowledge and innovation in our schools, contributing to a sense of Texas as a much less attractive place to build a business.

To protect the future of Texas and secure a bright future for our students and businesses, I sincerely urge you to vote NO on SB37.

Scott Aaronson, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

I'm a computer science professor at UT, although I'm writing in my personal capacity. For 20 years, on my blog and elsewhere, I've been outspoken in opposing woke radicalism on campus and (especially) obsessive hatred of Israel that often veers into antisemitism, even when that's caused me to get attacked from my left. Nevertheless, I write to strongly oppose SB37 in its current form, because of my certainty that no world-class research university can survive ceding control over its curriculum and faculty hiring to the state. If this bill passes, for example, it will severely impact my ability to recruit the most talented computer scientists to UT Austin, if they have competing options that will safeguard their academic freedom as traditionally conceived. Even if our candidates are approved, the new layer of bureaucracy will make it difficult and slow for us to do anything. For those concerned about intellectual diversity in academia, a much better solution would include safeguarding tenure and other protections for faculty with heterodox views, and actually enforcing content-neutral time, place, and manner rules for protests and disruptions. UT has actually done a better job on these things than many other universities in the US, and could serve as a national model for how viewpoint diversity can work — but not under an intolerably stifling regime like the one proposed by this bill.

Melanie Palmer
Self, scientist, medical provider
Austin, TX

This is over reach and is not needed or wanted. This will lead to poorer education and further erode education in the US. Stop dumbing down education.

Jonathan Dyen, Dr.
Self
Corpus Christi, TX

Dear Committee Members,

I write to you to express my concerns regarding SB 37. The higher ed system in Texas is one of the jewels of the state - a model for higher education worldwide and a key aspect of Texas' strong economy. If we allow politicians to dictate what faculty and students can teach or say, the faculty will be unable to help students develop the critical thinking skills they need to be strong contributors to the state work force. Too many educators and experts will not want to come here as they will not be able to help their students or conduct important research. Employers will not want to open businesses here since we will not have the best workforce in the nation as we do right now.

As someone who cherishes core Texas values like individual freedom and respect for cultural traditions, I hope you will reject or amend this bill to ensure faculty continue to have the power to share their expertise with the world and teach their students free of political interference. I hope you will protect the right of faculty to have a voice in the excellent institutions in which they serve. In this way, our colleges and our universities will continue to reflect the values and principles that make me and so many others proud to be a Texan.

Katharine Cartwright
Northwest Vista College, Professor (Retired)
San Antonio, TX

OPPOSE SB37, a sweeping bill that gives political appointees control over what students can learn in courses— muzzling faculty expertise and censoring critical thought— along with specific restrictions on discussions of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, religion, and social beliefs anywhere on campus.

SB 37 dismantles shared governance and due process, allowing political appointees to act unilaterally to block faculty hiring; shut down degree programs; and control the faculty senate. The bill requires political appointees to approve or disallow ads to hire tenured faculty in key fields like education, liberal arts, and social work.

SB 37 creates an "Ombudsman Office" to enforce SB 37. This Thought Police is empowered to fire faculty and defund entire institutions, thereby chilling free inquiry on campuses.

SB37 creates a statewide committee appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House to streamline the number and content of courses in the core curriculum required for Associate and Bachelor degrees.

Emily Weems
Self
Houston, TX

I am writing to strongly OPPOSE SB 37 that would seriously damage the integrity and independence of Texas public universities.

SB 37 grants excessive authority to university governing boards, allowing them to interfere in faculty hiring, dictate curriculum changes, and diminish the role of faculty councils. It also establishes vague oversight mechanisms—like a state-run ombudsman office—with the power to investigate institutions in ways that may open the door to political retaliation and censorship.

Faculty should have the freedom to teach. Students should have the freedom to learn. And universities should be governed with a balance of expertise—not centralized political control.

This bill threatens the foundation of higher education: shared governance, academic freedom, and independent thought.

Please stand up for quality education and vote NO on SB 37

Sharon Loewenstern
self/retired
Austin, TX

As an alumni of the University of Texas, I believe that allowing politicians this much control over academia is a huge overreach of power. This will destroy the reputation for excellence that our state colleges and universities have worked to hard to achieve. Faculty and students will not want to be a part of this repressive culture. Please vote against this bill.

Felipe Salinas
Self
McAllen, TX

I urge the Members of the Higher Education Committee to vote against SB 37. It contains several provisions that constitute overreach by the State of Texas in how curricula is managed in higher education institutions, and strips faculty from the legitimate role they have in the shared governance of our institutions. For these reasons, I urge the committee to vote "no" on SB 37.

Richard Oppenheim
self/musician
San Antonio, TX

SB37 is a sweeping bill that gives political appointees control over what students can learn in courses— muzzling faculty expertise and censoring critical thought— along with specific restrictions on discussions of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, religion, and social beliefs anywhere on campus.

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Kristin Hayes
Self, teacher
San Antonio, TX

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SB37 creates a statewide committee appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House to streamline the number and content of courses in the core curriculum required for Associate and Bachelor degrees.

How can any of this be good? Please stop trying to legislate educational freedom! You are creating a problem that doesn’t exist.

Beth Link, Dr.
self- Educator
Denton, TX

SB 37 is a dangerous erosion of academic freedom that puts the rigor and prestige Texas' R1 institutions at risk. I teach at an R1 university, but I provide these comments on behalf of myself only. At my institution we have already witnessed a brain drain after SB 17 where dedicated educators from subjects ranging from the arts to science and technology are leaving the university because of similar overreaches of the state. Texas is becoming a state people are afraid to move to, recently we had a few faculty searches where this came up again and again as candidates were nervous about moving to a state with a reputation for censorship and threats to academic freedom. It is becoming increasingly difficult for us to attract top talent to Texas. This is not fair to our students who deserve to learn from experts in their field, encounter differences, think critically, and form their own opinions.

SB 37 would place control of curriculum in the hands of state law makers and political appointees, rather than trained experts. Faculty members who have doctorates and masters degrees in their fields and know their students should be the ones determining the curriculum, not politicians. This bill would impede on faculty members' ability to teach critical thinking and include a range of perspectives- hallmarks of a first rate education. This bill would also put Texas' accreditation at risk and could hinder our ability to prepare teachers, doctors, and scientists for licensure in their fields. I work at a university preparing pre-service teachers, and worry that they might not be able to pass their competency exams if we are not able to adequately prepare them and certify that they have received training on how to work with diverse students with special needs, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.

SB 37 is a dangerous political take over of higher education that does not serve our students and make them better prepared, it cripples our chances of keeping up with peer institutions in other states and puts our ability to maintain accreditation and attract and retain faculty at risk. I urge you to reject SB 37 and save higher education in Texas!

Julie Mata
Self/ collegiate Assistant Professor of Practice, R1 Research Institution
GRANBURY, TX

As an Assistant Professor of Practice at an R1 Institution, a Christian woman, proud Texan and American, I find it incredibly concerning and almost unreal that Texas/American lawmakers are tying to limit academic freedom in our colleges. Putting appointed (rich, powerful, rarely educationally qualified) individuals in charge of educational curriculum would be yet another step away from democracy. Trust and teach scholars to know how to think for themselves and interrogate truth and facts from lies or opinions. Our leaders should do the same.

Merlyn Pulikkathara
Self
CYPRESS, TX

Only the faculty should review the curriculum and participate in certification programs. We are the experts in our fields. The faculty senate serves to ensure shared governance and the suggestions and advice of establishment of policies regarding faculty and students. This will ensure that we have a strong faculty which then prepares strong students.

Beverly Baxter
Self
Houston, TX

The contributions that black people have made and the sacrifices that have been made cannot be ignored. The country and future generations have the right to know the truth. These people and their names should not be erased from history. Their contributions should not be erased. The information that will be given to our children and future generations should be one sided and not fully known. Texas higher education you should reconsider how the curriculum should be taught to our children in all schools.

Carolina Arango-Vargas, Dr
Self, as a private citizen. HIgher Ed Instructor
San Antonio, TX

I write to you as a private citizen and Assistant Professor with a PhD in Anthropology, specializing in Women's and Gender Studies. For over a decade, I have taught in higher education—first in New York, then New Jersey, and for the past four years, at the University of Texas in San Antonio. My work is rooted in rigorous academic training, equipping students with critical skills for the 21st century.
Women's and Gender Studies (WGSS) is an interdisciplinary field shaped by over a century of struggles for equality. Since the 1970s, it has helped position the U.S. as a global leader in education, yet in Texas, WGSS programs face relentless attacks and misrepresentation. Politicians and religious figures who lack knowledge in this field dismiss its value—while my students recognize its profound impact on society.
Time and again, students demonstrate that WGSS fosters a deeper understanding of gender as a spectrum, individual freedom, and the historical contributions of women and marginalized communities. Many enter my classes unaware of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and systemic discrimination. They leave equipped to analyze these injustices and advocate for change.
For centuries, individuals who defy gender norms have endured shame, ostracism, and even death. Trans individuals of color, in particular, face alarming rates of violence. The U.S. prides itself on secular governance and the rule of law, yet restrictive legislation continues to fail its citizens—especially students who now grasp the history of these struggles and question why their rights are shrinking instead of expanding.
Our classes do not indoctrinate; we teach students to craft arguments, conduct research, and engage with deep intellectual traditions. We provide analytical tools to understand the intersections of gender, race, and class. What they do with this knowledge is up to them—but overwhelmingly, students express gratitude for their education. They leave more skilled in reading, writing, critical thinking, and translating ideas into action that strengthens Texas and the nation.
Texas is and has always been diverse, and its students deserve an education that reflects that reality. Many Mexican American and grassroots histories have been erased. Latinos and Mexican Americans continue to face systemic barriers, often confined to middle management instead of leadership roles. They deserve a world where they can dream, theorize, and safely express their identities.
Restricting curricula and censoring knowledge for teaching critical thinking does a disservice to Texans and the future of public education. I urge you not to support legislation that diminishes academic freedom, intellectual growth, and career prospects for the next generation. Texas already lags behind in education metrics. It should not become a national mockery. I ask you to stand for a Texas that embraces intellectual diversity and academic excellence—one that empowers students rather than silences them

Emanuel Papadakis
Self
Houston, TX

My name is Emanuel Papadakis. I am a professor of mathematics at the University of Houston and have served as a faculty senator for many years. I am also a registered Republican, a two-time voter for Governor Abbott and President Trump, and a Christian Orthodox. Today, I stand before you to express my deep concerns about Senate Bill 37, particularly regarding two key sections. Before starting, I would like to point out that the bill's view of education is centered around workforce preparation. Community colleges prepare the workforce, universities educate students to become independent thinkers and hopefully citizens who, as the bill states, can better society. Within this framework, we also prepare students to enter and survive an ever-changing workplace.
Concerns about sections 51.315 and 51.316
This section of the bill proposes a General Education Review Committee, seemingly overlooking the rigorous academic oversight that already exists within universities. Every institution has multiple curriculum committees—both for core and specialized courses—that meticulously review and approve courses before they make it into their course catalogs.
What is the purpose of an additional committee, handpicked by the Board of Regents, to oversee the core curriculum? Is its role to police academic content? To filter out courses with certain political or social perspectives? Instead of legislating a super-committee to “protect” students from challenging ideas, why not focus on fostering their ability to think critically, debate freely, and form their own conclusions? Democracy and freedom thrive on the open exchange of ideas. Authoritarian regimes seek to control what students are exposed to—real democracies do not fear diverse viewpoints; they fear a citizenry incapable of independent thought.
How is it possible to teach modern economic theory without referring to the surplus theory of Karl Marx? Will that require a student to become a Marxist? Will that be a non-compliant part of the curriculum? If it is, then when one teaches how Marx failed in some of his foundational predictions that capitalism is doomed to fail due its very nature of competition and business consolidation, will the course be non-compliant?
For these reasons, I strongly urge the removal of all provisions of this section with the exception of an external advisory board, comprised of industry, arts, and science leaders, to provide constructive input on curriculum and research priorities.
For these reasons, I recommend that 51.316 be altogether removed from the bill. 51.315 can stay only with the general provision 1-4, remove 5 altogether and modify 3, by adding “and adapt to an ever-changing technological world and workplace.”

Aja Galloway
Self
Spring, TX

This bill does not enhance education or individual’s ability to teach or provide more access to information, so how is this beneficial when it defeats the purpose of higher education. This bill does not help the professors, the students or the faculty and staff that put their time, passion, and bodies on the line to build the future of this country and create innovative and inquisitive minds. So what is the purpose of this bill if it is not helping the individuals that will be directly impacted by it. There are more effective, useful, and innovative solutions that can be passed than this bill.

Michol Chaney
Self
Austin, TX

In my last semester of college, my favorite course was Human Sexuality. By analyzing the social, cultural, and political aspects of human sexuality I gained a better understanding of sexuality as it pertains to myself and diverse populations. It provided me with empirical research that changed my conception of sexuality and sex education. The course was important in giving insight into diverse and inclusive experiences, which students in the future would not get to experience if SB 37 is allowed to restrict content. Human sexuality as a course focuses on the diversity of human experience and enables young people to understand the complexities of relationships, sex, communication, and the implications of gender, race, and sexuality, and provides students with tools and information to ensure their safety. Restricting the content of the class would severely affect students in new environments and impact risk behaviors of the student body. Furthermore, censoring discussions of race, gender, politics and history, erases the identities and experiences that have existed for centuries and will continue to exist regardless of their visibility on college campuses, putting these students at risk and undermining the quality of an honest education. Moreover, censoring content would restrict course discussions, taking away from the educational experience that students pay for. As a liberal arts major, it would severely impact the quality and value of my degree and education. Diversity in thought and critical thinking are foundational for a quality education.

Becky Smith
Self; Community Organizer
Houston, TX

I oppose this bill. This is overreach of state legislative governance and will damage education irreparably. Please oppose and do not pass SB 37 or any companion bill or substitute.

Carolyn Foote
Retired
Austin, TX

I'm a proud former graduate of the University of Texas and got advanced degrees there as well, against the bill. I know as an educator myself that the independence of university education is part of what makes America and Texas great. Universities are a grand melting pot of ideas, and our universities have faculty from all over the country and the world, with opinions on all different sides of issues, but also dedication to educating the students of our state. Over the course of my degrees, I encountered many different viewpoints which caused me to think, examine things with new lenses, to ask questions, and to learn both entrenched histories but also new academic scholarship. This bill would severely damage the independent thinking that our universities encourage, limit academic freedom, and harm the reputation of our universities which used to be respected nationwide. It is an intrusion into academic freedoms. I strongly oppose this bill. It is unTexan and unAmerican.

Alexia Hodge
Self
Houston, TX

Colleges in the state of Texas are some of the best in the nation and should be free to teach their students based on the freedoms guaranteed in our nation's constitution. Texas is going to suffer a brain drain of talented students and faculty which will seriously harm our present and future economic and societal well-being. I urge our legislatures to reject this bill.

Olga Estrada
UTSA
San Antonio, TX

As a graduate student at UTSA who teaches women and gender studies. I oppose SB 37. This bill infringes on our freedoms as educators. This bill will affect my life personally. I will not be able to teach women gender and sexuality studies and encourage students to engage in critical -and reciprocal dialogue. I will also not be able continue my educational research if I'm not able to talk about my experience navigating higher education as a queer nonbinary Latina educator/ student. This bill will effect the possibilities of me getting a job after I complete my degree. The 11 years of learning and teaching Mexican American studies through a queer feminist lens could lead to my exclusion as becoming a professor teaching queer studies. This bill is deeply anti-intellectual and limits our intellectual freedoms as educators and students. We cannot standardize higher education and be complicit in the erasure of our own lives. A bill like this would make navigating and thriving in higher education a whole lot harder for first generation students/educators like me.
I plead that this bill does not get past and that you stand on the side of humanity.
Professor Estrada

Alannah Rivers
Self College Professor
Denton, TX

I am writing in strong opposition to SB 37. As a faculty member speaking as a private citizen, this bill would seriously undermine my ability to contribute to my university's success. Faculty members are subject matter experts and we review curriculum with learning outcomes in mind. This should not be outsourced to people who do not know our fields, context, and students. Similarly, stripping the voice from faculty in the form of faculty senates will undermine an absolutely crucial value of academic freedom, which is shared governance. This is another way that expertise and insight built up over years within universities is used to strengthen the institution, which would be lost.

John Miller, Mr
Self
Austin, TX

I am writing to formally object to Senate Bill 37 (SB 37) as currently under consideration. This legislation represents a troubling political overreach into the governance and academic freedom of Texas's public universities, with serious consequences for faculty, students, and educational quality.

The Texas university system is the envy of the world. I am a graduate of this system, and received an incredibly valuable education that has led to a prosperous career and life. I have great faith in the educators to do what they do best, as they did with me and my other family members that attended various public Texas universities.

Fundamentally, I believe the state should keep out of the minutia of academia. We want the administrators and academics to run the universities, charged with producing quality education for students. By having the legislature or the state decide on or control education, we handicap the creative problem solving of the faculty and staff or our university system. The State has a big enough job running the state of Texas; why take on academics as well?

What we have is working. It's working so well that thousands and thousands of students from all over the world pay a premium to attend Texas schools. Our university system is the engine of business for the state. Messing with something that is clearly a great asset to the state, for without what appear to be good reasons, is risking one of the best things about Texas.

Let's not break a good thing, and leave the professors, faculty councils, and educational professionals to do their jobs without unnecessary interference and un-needed oversight.

Sincerely, John Miller

Natalie Zelt, Dr.
self
Austin, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Higher Education,

I'd like to express my sincere thanks to Chairman Wilson and all those involved in working tirelessly on the Committee Substitute for SB37 being heard today. Those efforts were a great service to fostering the best higher education possible in Texas. Thank you very very much. I am writing to express some specific concerns with the committee substitute as written, offer suggestions to potentially neutralize those concerns, and ask clarifying questions that would result in a stronger bill.

Article 1 Section 1.01 (b) (5) page 2 lines 11-13 states that the governing board will be charged with ensuring that courses "do not advocate or promote the idea that any race, sex, or ethnicity or any religious belief is inherently superior to any other race, sex, or ethnicity or any other religious belief."

The language of "advocate" and "promote" are frightfully ambiguous, especially considering the potential repercussions for violating this clause outline on page 19 lines 3-8.

"The idea" of supremacy is in many cases historical fact. For example racial supremacy decried by Nazi's in Germany during WWII.

"The idea" of supremacy is in many cases a fact in the present that students of varying backgrounds know from lived experience. To deny capacity to broach this in a university classroom setting where ideas might be challenged and interrogated with the support of a trained educator and area expert does a profound disservice to our students. It belittles their capacity to develop analytical and critical thinking skills necessary to foster innovation and creative problem solving in the workplace.

Therefore I urge either the consideration of the elimination of this clause all together and to leave this complex pedagogical problem to the educators rather than to politicians and board members.

Article 1 Section 1.03 © page 4 lines 21-24.

Who controls what constitutes industry data?

What is "workforce demand"?

Beyond these specific concerns, it cannot be iterated enough: this bill codifies a level of political control over higher education that is unlike any other in the United States. It will inevitably lead to working conditions that will drive away the excellent faculty and staff that have made Texas Higher Ed globally renown. It will also make it incredibly difficult to recruit faculty and research dollars to continue to grow. No member of the committee strives for the development of a workforce devoid of critical thinking skills and unprepared to be resilient in an increasingly complex working world. Please consider revising or voting no on SB37.

Thank you

Natalie Zelt

Taylor Love
Self
Manor, TX

I urge the committee to oppose SB 37 as it will greatly hurt the economy, knowledge, and workers of Texas. This bill has already resulted in a climate of fear at UT Austin, with faculty already receiving threats simply for being subject matter experts. This bill would result in a mass exodus of both faculty and students from the great public education system of Texas. Texas has the potential to be a leader in science and technology, but SB37 would squash that potential by allowing political appointees to enforce a vague rule about "distorting history" that would silence honest teaching. If the most brilliant faculty and students choose to go to another state, Texas loses. The economy will suffer, and students will leave with degrees that do not prepare them to be engaged citizens able to work in diverse workplaces, putting us at the bottom of the global workforce. I urge the committee to vote NO on SB 37 in order to keep Texas strong by attracting and keeping the most talented faculty and workforce.

Pauline Strong, Dr.
self
Austin, TX

My name is Pauline Strong, and I speak as a private citizen in opposition to all forms of SB 37. I have taught at the University of Texas at Austin for over 30 years, where I regularly teach courses that meet core curriculum requirements. I have received many awards for teaching, and I have been directly involved in curriculum development and assessment. I have also been involved in many forms of facul-ty governance and sserved on numerous selection or advisory committees for deans, chairs, directors, and faculty.
This illustrates the involvement in governance, curriculum development, and curriculum assessment that faculty are expected to have in Texas public colleges and universities. We are highly trained professionals, and participation in governance is part of our job. Far from the stereotype of “woke” professors that this bill is designed to address, faculty in Texas colleges and universities are responsible, hard-working citizens dedicated to the advancement of our students, our institutions, and the state. I have never once had a student complain to me or a superior that I have attempted to indoctrinate them. The reason is simple: I have not done so. Nor am I aware of colleagues who have indoctrinated students. We are committed to the free exchange of ideas, intellectual diversity, and civil discourse. In my case, this is one of my specialties. I founded our nationally known Difficult Dialogues Program, which supports faculty and teaching assistants in developing courses that teach students to engage in civil dialogues on controversial topics.
With respect, I submit that SB 37 is based on a faulty premise, and it offers a remedy that would be disastrous for Texas public higher education. There is no need to increase state oversight over hiring, curriculum, faculty governance, and compliance in institutions of higher education. Our institutions al-ready have several levels of oversight at the departmental, college, university, System, and Coordinating Board levels. The bill’s overregulation and micromanagement would only harm our faculty and administration’s work to keep our teaching and research up to date and responsive to the needs of our students and our state. Like any professionals, we need the autonomy to work to our capacity and to develop new, cutting-edge courses. And our institutions need the flexibility to develop programs that serve their own student bodies, which vary dramatically across the state.
Please know that any course that meets a core curriculum requirement is rigorously vetted and regularly evaluated at the campus level. Faculty are not getting away with teaching that is shoddy, out-of-date, or ideologically narrow. Our colleagues and administrators make sure of that. Our students do as well. Students fill our surveys after every course and do not hesitate to offer criticisms of professors. Faculty and administrators take student criticisms seriously, and teaching is rigorously evaluated.
Please oppose SB 37.

William Fagelson
self, University Professor
Austin, TX

My name is Bill Fagelson, representing myself as a private citizen opposed to all versions of SB 37. I'm also a UT Austin faculty member in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

There are many ways SB37 would be catastrophic, among them turning our state's many first-rate Universities and community colleges into second-rate institutions. Others have and will continue to address those ways, so I will speak to a part of the bill that affects my role directly.

My primary responsibility is teaching writing, speaking, and, importantly, ethics to our undergraduate engineering students.

Accreditation requires that we teach students, among other things, "the impact of engineering solutions in global, economic, environmental, and societal contexts" as well as that they learn to design "with consideration of global, cultural, social, environmental, and economic factors."

SB37 would make it impossible to achieve that objective, given that every conversation about ethical issues risks crossing a very blurry line created by language that forbids advocating, promoting, or requiring adherence to certain beliefs.

To be clear, those are not things I ever do—nor does any faculty member I've ever worked with—but I can easily imagine how just exposing a student to a belief challenging their own could and will be twisted into fitting that description. If I play devil's advocate in class, have I crossed that line?

There is no honest way to expose students to a belief without explaining or exploring the rationale behind it. In fact, that is the only way to argue against it – that's what a robust liberal arts education teaches.

That's also the educational mission of any first-class educational institution: to broaden the experience of our students, teaching them to confront the world around them as critical thinkers.

The goal has always been to expose students to the marketplace of ideas (a Jeffersonian concept that may be too radical for this bill), not to coerce agreement but to allow them to make their own choices about their beliefs and to test—and thus strengthen and even refine—those beliefs in that crucible.

My sense is that a University, and a State, afraid to put those beliefs to that test doesn't have much faith in them to begin with.

The underlying goal of this bill—in its removal of faculty from any meaningful role in governance, hiring, or even what and how to teach, as well as a mechanism for eliminating entire departments arbitrarily—is not to educate our students, but to indoctrinate them. Not to aid the University's fulfillment of its mission, but to undermine it.

Martha Newman
self. Professor of History and Religious Studies, UT Austin
Austin, TX

My name is Martha Newman, and I am speaking as a private citizen. I am also a Professor at UT Austin where I have taught history and religion for 37 years, I am an affiliate of the Jewish Studies Program, and I have run two academic departments.

I urge you to oppose SB37 in any of its forms. This bill brings the core curriculum and faculty hiring under state control. It is an example of government overreach that creates unnecessary and costly bureaucracies, and it undermines freedom by controlling both our teaching and our students' expression.

My perspective comes from teaching students about the medieval origins of modern institutions in a Western Civilization course. Teachers organized a "university" in the early 13th century by gaining independence from government interference. Universities were among the earliest European institutions with democratic self-government. They controlled their curriculum and their membership (ie, hiring). Repeatedly, the king and the church thought the students too rowdy and the professors too independent, but they nonetheless granted universities rights of self-government. Their reasons sound very familiar. Even in the middle ages, universities educated students whom people wanted to hire, they provided major economic benefits to their regions, and they were a source of pride and prestige. And even in the middle ages, teachers and students moved elsewhere when governments threatened their rights of self-government.

I also taught a freshman core class called "Religions in Practice." I made very clear to my students that, in studying religion, my job was neither to make them religious nor to discourage them from being religious. Rather, our task together was to understand the history and practices of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Students brought their own experiences to the class, and they listened to each other with respect and interest. These free and multi-sided discussions are what the Humanities and Liberal Arts encourage. HB 37 will stiffle such classes.

As a department chair, I administered the first step in rigorous process of curriculum oversight that continued through many layers of higher administration. We do not need political interference in our curriculum. Please oppose HB 37.

Danita Below, Ms.
Self
Houston, TX

I believe that we should have a Ombudsman to oversee, who will investigates, reports on, and helps settle complaints : This is a individual that affiliates with an organization or business who serves as an advocate for patients, consumers, employees, etc. He or she is able to resolve the problem. I think to have one is very important.

Ginia Black
Self, mother, citizen
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Vote Nay! SB 37 is a hostile takeover of Texas higher education. The school, and the parents need to be the ones making these decisions!

It hands unprecedented power to politically appointed boards to override faculty, censor curricula, and micromanage hiring decisions. It undermines shared governance, academic freedom, and the mission of public universities to educate-not just train workers.

Jennifer Kost, Mrs.
self (stay at home mom, volunteer in schools)
Austin, TX

Dear Chairman Wilson and members of the Committee,

I am a parent of a high school senior and truly concerned about what I am hearing about this bill. Texas has wonderful public universities, and I am concerned that SB 37 is undoing structures and processes that have lead to these universities being so respected and sought-after, by students not only from Texas but across the nation and around the world.

Faculty senates are integral to the governance of universities, bringing their expertise in their various fields to inform curriculum and governance decisions.

Politicians and political appointees should not have control over university curriculum, at the university level nor statewide. A variety of ideas and viewpoints expands students' minds, their capacity for creativity and critical thinking, and for working collaboratively with people with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. Let our universities continue to challenge students, and to be different from each other – Texas A&M and UT Austin are not different from each other only because of football, and that is a good thing.

Neither should politicians and political appointees have unilateral power to block hiring, fire faculty, shut down degree programs, nor control the outcomes of investigations and the grievance process. Our universities have systems in place that rely on the expertise of educators and of leaders in their fields. When problems are found with these systems, improve them, don't throw them out and threaten to shut down funding.

Please vote no on SB 37, and on any bill that would prioritize politics over pedagogy.

Thank you for listening and for your service to the citizens of our great state.

Jessica Coats-Drummond
Texas State Employees Union
Austin, TX

I'm Jessica Coats-Drummond and I'm speaking for myself as a taxpayer and member of the Texas State Employees Union. I have worked in Higher Education for over 5 years and know how critical it is to have experts in their field leading the charge. I adamantly oppose SB 37 which fundamentally undermines student success through unparalleled government overreach.
Faculty, staff (including administration) and students work together to make higher education institutions rigorous and relevant. Professional development and student feedback are critical to every position on campus and this bill completely undermines those pillars. Instead it cherry-picks people that the Governor prefers to push institutions in their policial direction. You wouldn't hire a hairdresser to design your city infrastructure, a roofing technician as the pilot of your plane, or a software engineer as your landscaper, so why would you hire a politician to oversee a university. Leave the experts to do their job, stop trying to over complicate and over dictate a system that was working perfectly without you.
Faulty and staff along with student evaluation come together to develop new course content, update curriculum, enhance course evaluation, research policies, faculty hiring and promotion policies. At the end of the day students are the ones paying for this four year degree and they picked their college specifically for the world class education they would receive from the faculty and staff that uplift the university. SB 37 would undermine the whole institution. It would lead to faculty leaving Texas to seek employment elsewhere and consequently less enrollment with lower quality students.
SB 37 will take away the agency of Texans and undermine our educational institutions. Please Vote No to SB 37.

German Amador
Self, retired engineer
Houston, TX

I oppose SB37. Our Texas colleges and universities have become great through innovative, relevant classes and curriculum. Please to not let the governor or any government-appointed entity control classes or curriculum.

Andrea Baer, Dr.
self
Austin, TX

I am Andrea Baer and I am speaking against HB 37. I am a public university professor, but am speaking as a private individual. When many people think of university teaching, they picture a professor at the front of an auditorium giving a monologue, but many college classes, including mine, are not structured this way. I teach students academic research and critical thinking, essential skills needed for the workplace. Class discussion, students' freedom to identify a research topic, and instructor feedback are vital to learning in this course. HB 37 would make this kind of evidence-based teaching impossible, as if would limit what faculty can teach and say and what students can learn.
As students in my class develop and explore their own research questions, they build their critical thinking and communication skills. Rather than quickly formulating an argument, students take time to explore their questions from multiple angles. We discuss how, when someone decides too early in the research process what they believe the answers to a question are, this usually results in poor research. Prematurely forming an argument prevents a genuine investigation and consideration of multiple perspectives. Students are encouraged instead to practice what is sometimes called "slow thinking": taking time to explore an issue or problem before deciding what to do or think about it.
Students have shared with me how valuable practices like slow thinking have become for them in their education, work, and everyday life. This is true for students across the political spectrum, regardless of the kind of issue they decided to research. Through their research process, they develop a much deeper understanding of their research topic and sharpen their critical thinking skills.
All the faculty I know share a similar teaching philosophy: our goal is to help students learn how to think more critically, not to teach them what to think. These faculty are highly skilled in facilitating this process. HB 37 would rob students of meaningful opportunities for learning. This legislation would limit not only what faculty can teach, but also what students can learn and say. HB 37 runs counter to the central goals of learning, as well as to free expression and thought. It would also drive our most talented and dedicated faculty out of the state, drastically degrading the quality of education in Texas.
Some who support of HB 37 have incorrectly argued that faculty seek to indoctrinate students into specific ways of thinking. In reality, HB 37 would have this effect, as it places strict lines around what can and cannot discussed. This legislation would put both students and faculty in fear of saying almost anything.
The Texas has a high-class university system that benefits the state and its people in countless ways, including through learning, workforce development, and economic impact. HB 37 would take that way. If you care about the future of Texas, I urge you to reject HB 37.

Mia Markey
self, Professor
Austin, TX

My name is Mia K. Markey. I am an engineering professor at UT Austin, but I am here speaking as a private citizen and mother of four against SB 37. I grew up on a small farm and am the first generation in my family to go to college. So even after 23 years on the faculty, I am in awe of the incredible opportunities available to our students at UT Austin.

When my son, Henry, graduated from high school, I enthusiastically encouraged him to attend UT Austin because I knew that at UT he would get a world class education in both engineering and the liberal arts. At UT, my son has had the chance to work side by side with graduate students and faculty to learn how to design more efficient railway systems. At UT, he's taken classes that opened his eyes to many different viewpoints, from a course on Black Women's Studies to a course on Modern American Political Campaigns that was taught by Karl Rove.

We are homeschooling our two teenage daughters while they participate in Austin Community College's wonderful dual enrollment program. As a dual enrollment student at ACC, Fiona's learned how to frame a house, place a concrete slab, and weld alongside taking foundational courses in math and science that will prepare her for a four-year degree program. Meanwhile, Leia is learning about cultural change from her first ACC course, a class on fashion history. ACC's small classes and focus on serving the whole community has afforded my kids many chances to learn about different viewpoints.

But now I am afraid of what SB 37 would mean for my kids' futures. I want my kids to be taught by experts who aren't afraid to have open and honest discussions about challenging topics. If SB 37 passes, I will have to advise my kids to look to universities outside of Texas to get a good education.

David Baker
self
Austin, TX

SB37 poses a significant threat to higher education institutions in Texas. Texas has some of the best public universities in the country do in large part because of the academic freedom afforded to professors to run classrooms how they choose. SB37 not only hinders the learning environment on college campuses by creating needless bureaucracy in curriculum review but will also cause yet another brain-drain as teachers and professors leave due to the reduced academic freedom.
Another aspect of SB37 that threatens higher education in Texas is the review of "certain degree and certificate programs". This is a thinly veiled attack on the humanities. Majors, like philosophy, are incredibly important, often overlooked, and are now at threat of being eliminated in Texas because the "return on investment" isn't seen by the government. Philosophy is the basis for all scientific and mathematical disciplines. On top of that, learning philosophy also improves the performance of other careers such as lawyers and doctors. If you look at long-term money-making potential, humanity majors, like philosophy, level out with other degrees.
SB37 is an incredibly short-sighted bill that will have dramatic ramifications for higher education in Texas if passed. If you care about retaining the elite universities that we have in Texas, SB37 cannot pass.

Johnny Buckles
Self
KINGWOOD, TX

I'm Johnny Rex Buckles, Professor at the University of Houston Law Center. I speak today as a private citizen, not for UH.

I oppose SB37 because it rips authority over curriculum, hiring, and faculty governance from people best able to make decisions about teaching and academic life. SB37 replaces the experienced judgment of faculty for the opinions of those who may know little about academic reality.

The Bill apparently presumes that political appointees are better than faculty at creating courses, hiring, and overseeing academic life, perhaps because of a perception that Texas faculties have no intellectual diversity. I defy that notion.

I teach various courses in tax law, and law & theology (among others). Though my law degree is from Harvard, I also have a degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. Here are a few of my articles: A Defense of the Unborn Person, A Rawlsian Critique of the Political Speech Constraints on Charities, Curbing (or Not) Foreign Influence on United States Politics and Policies through the Federal Taxation of Charities, Unashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: On Public Policy and Public Service by Evangelicals, The Sexual Integrity of Religious Schools and Tax Exemption. All of these articles, and many more, are available on SSRN, with my author page accessible here: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/cf_dev/AbsByAuth.cfm?per_id=328757

Core academic functions must be performed by faculty with unique expertise and perspectives, not by appointees who drift with political tides. I am a product of, and significant contributor to, the current process. You now know that I am not what many imagine a professor to be. But at UH, I am not just a token religious liberty and nonprofits tax law scholar. UH has called on me for important roles that SB37 ultimately undermines. At the Law Center, I have chaired hiring committees and served on another; chaired teaching committees; served on a Dean Search committee; and chaired curriculum committees. I am now serving in my second term on the university-wide advisory committee on tenure and promotion. The current system has heavily utilized someone like me in areas that the Bill tries to micro-manage. Please do not minimize my voice and the voice of others who bring unique perspectives and insights to higher education.

With respect, if you value faculty with intellectually rich experience, kill the bill.

Sandy Zamora
self/Licensed Professional Counselor
San Antonio, TX

I call to take action and vote NAY on SB 37.

Diane Teter
Self, Professor Emerita of Biology at STC
Edinburg, TX

As a retired educator who is a professor emerita of biology from a local college as well as a former faculty senate president, president-elect, secretary, and senator at this same college, I am writing to strongly urge you to vote NO on SB 37, a bill that would seriously damage the integrity and independence of Texas public universities.

SB 37 grants excessive authority to university governing boards, allowing them to interfere in faculty hiring, dictate curriculum changes which are clearly not in their academic credentials and educational experience. This bill would also diminish the role of faculty councils which are essential for bridging understanding and promoting cooperation between administration, faculty, and students.

SB 37 also establishes vague oversight mechanisms—like a state-run ombudsman office—with the power to investigate institutions in ways that may open the door to political retaliation and censorship which is a very real thing in the past and will be increased in the future with this bill with too many false non-present actors in the classroom and in faculty as well as administrative meetings.

Faculty should have the freedom to teach. They are the content experts who have the credentials to do so.

Students should have the freedom to learn, and use critical thinking skills.

Colleges and universities should be governed with a balance of expertise—not centralized control by one political party.

This bill threatens the foundation of higher education: shared governance, academic freedom, and independent thought.

Please stand up for quality education and vote NO on SB 37.

Franklin Strong
Self
Austin, TX

I'm a proud Longhorn (BA '01, PhD '15) and I strongly urge you vote against this bill. Our Texas public universities are treasures--they provide research that benefits the whole world, they draw great minds from across the globe that come here to teach and enrich our state, and, most importantly, they provide broad, rigorous educations to hundreds of thousands of Texans. They have become such respected institutions because they have been built on the principles of inquiry and academic freedom--values that also respect the best of the Texan spirit. SB37 replaces those values with ideological conformity and governmental micromanaging. It would damage the great schools of which we are all so proud, and it is an affront to Texas values. Please vote against it.

Ana Carolina Diaz Beltran, Ph.D.
Self, Professor
Brownsville, TX

By consolidating curriculum decisions at higher education institutions under a governing board of the university system, this bill ignores the expertise of professors who have dedicate years to studying decades of academic research within their fields of knowledge. It places these scholars—who have devoted countless hours to studying, producing, thinking, practicing, and teaching—under the authority of a committee that lacks comparable expertise, training, or commitment. This handpicked committee, despite disregarding academic knowledge, will be tasked with approving and shaping curricula in fields that have long been discussed and developed through academic conferences, scholarly publications, and professional associations. This action goes beyond curricular plans, it defines what are valid forms of knowledge within the university which based on this bill will be governed by a board that seeks to control knowledge rather than pursue it. In doing so, the bill imposes standards on academic disciplines that reflect business-oriented, rather than scholarly, definitions of success. Stop this bill!

Nancy Mossman, Rev.
self
Austin, TX

I oppose this bill because I believe in the independence of institutions of higher education and learning. Universities are designed to foster creativity, critical thinking and diverse points of view. The best way to do that is to allow faculty to determine their own curriculum and teaching methods. Their peers and University faculty and administrators are positioned to hold one another accountable for their teaching, not the state legislature or any state board or agency.

Catherine LaBrenz, Dr.
self
Mansfield, TX

As an educator, I strongly oppose SB 37 in its current form. Experts in each field should have oversight over curriculum matters. There are already rigorous processes for university administration to approve and solicit changes as needed to courses and required materials. Assigning non-experts to review and oversee curriculum will create more bureaucracy, red tape, and add to inefficiency at the university (and state-level). Furthermore, it is crucial to uphold academic freedom and allow for different viewpoints and opinions within the classrooms. We should encourage faculty to pursue challenging lines of research that push the envelope, as this can give way to innovation and cutting-edge technology that have been hallmarks of U.S. higher education for decades.

s Kuehl
sele retired
Houston, TX

WHy is it that yall want another generation to not be able to critical think in our society? This bill is what fascism racism and sexism is all about - white male FAUX "christian" not allowing young people to create their own thought process. Letting elected officials control higher education is WRONG.. (just like yall have already screwed public education so that your little fascists in training can get money to go to schools they chosen to go to (they can pay for that) ...
Screw this bill that creighton has created since all he apparently wants is subservience. SHAME ON YALL if this passes...

Andrea Gore
self
Austin, TX

I'm Dr. Andrea Gore, Professor of Pharmacy at UT-Austin (speaking as a private resident of TX)

I oppose SB37 in all versions. It will cause Texas higher education to descend into mediocrity. It removes from the educational decision-making process those who know most about it – the faculty. Instead, governing boards are charged with curricular and hiring decisions and even day-to-day work of running a university. Regents are real estate developers, attorneys, businesspeople, and physicians. I have met many regents and I respect their dedication, but they aren't educators.
Many of us here to testify today are faculty who have dedicated our lives to being educators and researchers. We stand united against SB37.

SB37 attacks Faculty Senates. I've served and even chaired our Faculty Council. It enables us to serve our students, help faculty navigate their jobs, and keep up with education technology. It's a lot of time and work, and we do it for free, just as we do all our service. (There's no compensation, as implied in SB37.)
SB37 disempowers and disenfranchises faculty by undercutting democratic elections, filling the Senates with administrative appointees rather than elected representatives. Your own TX House consists of democratically elected representatives, and you got to elect your Speaker. Would you like to lose those rights?
That's what SB37 does to faculty senates.
I invite you to get to know faculty. We are not a threat. We are the ones students go to when they feel threatened. We transform students' lives. Here's one from a student:
"This has been the most trying year of my life. Through all that you've been so supportive of me and my staying in lab. You're one of the most understanding and caring people that I've had the privilege to meet."

This is who we are and why we do it. Taking away our voice undermines our ability to support our students and keep TX universities strong. Vote no on SB37. And get to know us and hear our stories.

Breanna Harris
myself; educator
Lubbock, TX

Senate Bill 37 is a threat to the foundational values of higher education in Texas and should not be passed. By authoritatively regulating governance and curricula, SB37 undermines academic freedom and institutional autonomy. While supporters claim it promotes neutrality, SB 37 instead imposes state control over knowledge, curriculum, and campus life. SB37 promotes erosion of independent thought and leadership.

Texas students are the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators, however, SB37 deeply limits their rights to a comprehensive education. College is where students confront complexity, expand their perspectives, and develop critical thinking skills. Banning educational programs deemed economically or ideologically unworthy undermines this process. It is also incredibly shortsighted and will harm Texas economics. Reducing education to a value rating based on a vague scoring system "consistent with the goals of the coordinating board's long-range master plan for higher education" is both dangerous and antithetical to the mission of higher education.

Higher education is not just about a check-box list of professional preparation; it is also about cultivating citizens who are knowledgeable, empathetic, informed, and able to think critically. Development of these skills is accomplished by taking a breadth of coursework. SB 37 narrows the intellectual terrain on which students can engage, and it limits their attainment of broad knowledge and histories. Most concerningly, these limits are posed arbitrarily and at the whim of a handful of politicians. SB 37 threatens to diminish the competitiveness of Texas universities by limiting what they can study and learn in our state.

Further, the bill infringes on institutional autonomy and shared governance. Historically, Texas universities have shaped curricula and policies through collaboration among faculty, administrators, and students. SB 37 replaces this with top-down mandates from the legislature. Such interference weakens academic quality and sets a dangerous precedent for future government overreach. Limiting shared governance disrupts how universities function. It silences the expertise of those most qualified to lead educational decisions. When legislatures override this structure, the result is administrative confusion, misaligned priorities, and campus climates hostile to innovation. Undermining this model not only hampers student learning but also the ability of institutions to adapt and serve diverse populations effectively.

SB 37 is not merely bureaucratic—it is a sweeping political intrusion into public education. It diminishes Texas's ability to educate future leaders and replaces academic inquiry with political control. It is shortsighted and dangerous to our states long-term outcomes. Higher education must remain a place where ideas are tested and challenged, not censored. It must be governed by educators, not politicians with partisan agendas.

Alexander De Jesus
Self, student
Frisco, TX

Members of the committee,

I strongly oppose this bill in all forms and I highly encourage that bills like these be seriously scrutinized before further permission given in its current form. This bill is alarmingly bad and would adversely affect the higher education system that has been painfully built from its R1 status to unique approaches. Take UT Dallas , my Alma matter. While we pride on our research and ability to make talented students with a large international understanding, this wasn't done through high restrictions as this bill proposes or via the minimum degrees requirements, but rather through autonomous ingenuity and ideas made by faculty and students. Engineers learn many international and historical event classes because it helps to broaden understandings, but also incorporate new mindset and understandings to consider problems in better angles. In political science we use that method and take inspiration from the hard sciences to also innovate, by not only having students challenge material but also develop the tools to better examine perspectives not considered before.

In short, this bill aims to destroy such mechanisms utilized by autonomous universities to allow students to grow , challenge themselves, and thrive. It would critically limit how at universities with large international students and minority populations can exchange ideas or give new perspectives. The university is a garden, and gardens can die if they are over managing . SB 37 adding additional top down restrictions and layers stifles growth, flexibility, and genuine progress under workforce rhetoric. However it's because we have been flexible we meet workforce requirements, and grow students with a mindset that's flexible to react to situations. A bill that instead aims to over comply, and add mechanisms that will make universities cut things out of fear that have helped students is not going to help us students, but rather hurt them. If the idea is to make students better prepared, then this bill is tantamount to an overzealous weed killer hurting everyone.

Please do not let this bill progress.

Susan Anderson
self
Benbrook, TX

As a faculty member at a private university in Texas and the parent of a student at the University of Texas at Austin, I strongly oppose Senate Bill 37. While I appreciate the Texas House's efforts to moderate some of the bill's more extreme elements, the revised version still poses serious risks to the quality, reputation, and academic freedom of our public universities.

SB 37 invites unprecedented political interference in higher education. The Senate version allows politically appointed boards to approve faculty hiring, dictate curriculum content, and penalize universities for teaching vaguely defined "ideologically biased" topics—language that creates a chilling effect. Even with House revisions that narrow hiring oversight and remove some ideological language, the bill still threatens institutional autonomy and open inquiry.

As a parent, I worry about the impact on my child's education at UT-Austin. As a faculty member, I'm concerned about the talent drain this climate is creating. I'm personally losing three colleagues this year—all leaving Texas for places more aligned with their values. Some faculty fear even acknowledging systemic inequality, something that does exist, whether we admit it or not. Students already know that, and we lose credibility when we don't address it in class. Such an atmosphere of self-censorship is incompatible with higher education's role in promoting inquiry, critical thinking, and the pursuit of truth in service of the public good.

SB 37 affects 1.4 million students and over 80,000 faculty. It risks long-term reputational damage to flagship institutions like UT-Austin and Texas A&M. The recent departures of both the UT-Austin president and UT System chancellor reflect how difficult it is to lead under growing political pressure.

This bill undermines faculty governance, restricts academic freedom, and politicizes what should remain a nonpartisan pursuit: providing rigorous, evidence-based education to students. I urge you to reject SB 37 and protect the excellence, integrity, and independence of higher education in Texas.

Olive Embry
self- student
Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. Keep the hands of big government off my school. You snowflakes need to get a grip.

Lueng Tcheung, Dr
Self, physician
Austin, TX

Please do not approve this bill. Educational institutions have the expertise to decide what the curricula should be for themselves and not by a board. A board would be dangerous to the community and public.

Shelley Sallee
self
Austin, TX

I urge you to oppose SB 37.

Clay Embry
self - Software Developer
Austin, TX

I oppose this bill. Legislators should not try to dictate what Texas Universities can teach. I'm tired of the the Texas big government nanny state trying to dictate how we teach, learn, and think. Snowflake students are running to the government to try to get laws passed to "protect" them from having to hear anything they disagree with. That's not how academia works. If you agree with everything you hear in a classroom at your university, then you probably aren't learning much. Students might have viewpoints that put them in the minority. There's nothing wrong with that. We don't want groupthink. We do want an environment where everyone can speak and be heard and where ideas can be exchanged respectfully. What we don't need is the legislature taking sides and mandating which topics and viewpoints are allowed.

Brian Evans

Self and Professor

Austin, TX

> My name is Brian Evans, and I'm speaking as a private citizen against all versions of SB 37.
I serve as President of the Texas Conference of the American Association of University Professors.
I'm a tenured Professor of Engineering, and a former Faculty Senate President.

> Texas has more top-tier research universities and health institutions than any other state because of faculty freedom to teach, question, and discover.
To gain these top-tier distinctions, faculty graduate the doctoral students and win billions of dollars in competitive research grants.
And faculty at our community colleges are leading in workforce development for skilled labor and other careers.

> To recruit and retain faculty, it's a national marketplace.
In a survey of Texas faculty in August, a majority of respondents mentioned a dearth of applicants for faculty positions. [1]
More than a quarter of the surveyed faculty interviewed for positions in other states.
Top reasons for leaving include anxieties about the freedom to teach, shared governance [2], tenure, and salary.

> SB 37 will further hinder faculty hiring and retention by harming freedom in teaching, research, and expression.
SB 37 takes curriculum out of the hands of faculty experts and places it under control of administrators without subject matter knowledge.
SB 37 places Faculty Senates under administrative control, diminishing the range of opinions administrators hear as they make decisions.

> We're concerned about vague language concerning political rights of faculty senators.
In the committee substitute, we'd ask the committee to consider clarifying amendments:
-- page 10, line 13, add "as a faculty senator or council member" after "by using the member's position"
-- page 12, line 2, add "speech or" after "from exercising the faculty member's right to freedom of"

I'm happy to answer any questions.

[1] Sept. 5, 2024 – Large Majority of Texas Faculty Express Concern About Higher Education; More than a Quarter Consider Leaving Next Year, Survey Finds, https://www.texasaft.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/texas-faculty-survey-press-release-sept-2024.docx
[2] Shared Governance at the University of Texas System Institutions: A White Paper, 2016, https://www.uttyler.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/files/execsummary.pdf

Judson Robinson

Houston Area Urban League, Inc. (Houton Area Urban League, Inc.)

Houston, TX

I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Bill 37 (SB37), which aims to impose significant restrictions on the teaching and governance of public universities in Texas. SB37 would allow political appointees to control the curriculum, limiting the ability of faculty to teach critical topics related to race, ethnicity, politics, and social beliefs. This bill undermines academic freedom by restricting the open exchange of ideas and the expertise of educators.
The bill also proposes a statewide committee, appointed by political figures, to evaluate and potentially eliminate core curricula at public universities. This would limit faculty autonomy and the ability to make decisions about course content based on academic expertise. Additionally, the creation of an "Ombudsman Office" to enforce compliance with SB37 could result in sanctions against universities and faculty members for teaching content that does not align with political perspectives.
SB37's provisions could lead to self-censorship, a decline in academic quality, and the potential for Texas universities to lose top faculty talent. The bill threatens the integrity of higher education in Texas, which has long been a leader in research and innovation. It is essential that we maintain academic freedom and ensure that faculty have the autonomy to teach and research without political interference.
I strongly urge members of the House Committee on Higher Education to consider the long-term impacts of SB37 and reject this bill. Texas' universities must remain places of open inquiry, critical thinking, and academic freedom for the benefit of all students and the state's future.

Angie Price, Dr.
Self- faculty member higher ed
Navasota, TX

My name is Angie Hill Price, and I am writing as a private citizen. I am a faculty member in engineering at Texas A&M University, and Speaker of the Faculty Senate. I am opposed to SB 37 in any form. SB 37 and its variants will cause irreparable harm to the academic processes and in the long term, the reputations of our state universities.

The Faculty Senate at Texas A&M University was founded in 1983. In the past 42 years, this organization has been a proud partner in shared governance with the University administration in the growth of the stature, quality, and reputation of Texas A&M University, and in the constant improvement of the entire student experience. We are advisory to the President.
This bill creates bureaucracy, destroys the shared governance model which strengthens our institutions, and infantilizes our students. Our students are adults with agency who deserve the very best education from experts in the field. They deserve to choose what they wish to study, and with whom. Our students become industry and government leaders and Fortune 500 CEOs, and contribute to the economic engine that drives the great State of Texas. We are a very successful University – rather than facing to others as aspirational peers, we are the aspiration.

• The Wall Street Journal last October said Texas A&M was the best university in the state, ahead of UT-Austin and Rice.
• Money Magazine named TAMU as the No. 1 public institution of higher education in Texas.
• The university has significantly improved its rankings in recent years in the list of the nation's best schools compiled by U.S. News & World Report.
• Forbes ranked A&M No. 17 among the nation's best universities.
• Texas A&M was the first Texas institution to top more than $1 billion in research expenditures.

Our students become industry and government leaders and Fortune 500 CEOs, and contribute to the economic engine that drives the great State of Texas. We are a very successful University – rather than facing to others as aspirational peers, we are the aspirational model for other universities across the nation and world. We have high demand for our degrees, and our enrollment has been steadily increasing, with ever increasing applications.
All that has happened with a Faculty Senate directly involved in enhancing the curriculum and working with students to improve their experience inside and outside the classroom. The Faculty Senate is advisory to the President. We have numerous committees who provide valuable feedback to University leadership on multiple fronts so as to ensure they have the best data on which to base decisions and avoid unintentional consequences. The members of the Faculty Senate take this responsibility to the institution very seriously, as we strive to add value to our student’s degrees.

Non tenure track, tenure track, and tenured faculty alike have the same ultimate goal of providing support in the improvement of the university.

Grant King
Self
Austin, TX

NO

Samantha Ho
Student and educator
Austin, TX

This bill is a violation of free speech and Title VI. The government should not regulate what is allowed to be taught, spoken about, and thought critically about in higher education, or in any context. This bill is clearly partisan against the left and is a political weapon against the free thinking of and access to information for young people, but ultimately, the entire society. We're not living in 1984 and we don't have a Thought Police. Do not pass this bill or Big Brother will backfire on you.

Sarah Beck
Self
Austin, TX

I'm a born and raised Texan and I urge you to vote against SB 37. This bill is an attempt to sideline and sensor faculty as well as limit the freedom to teach. This bill gives state-appointed boards too much control as well as creates a burden for universities. It will limit essential discussions on difficult history, race, ethnicity, politics, and religion. These sometimes sensitive topics are essential for us to learn so we as a society don't repeat problems of the past. Please vote against SB 37. Thank you.

Stephennie Mulder
Self
Austin, TX

My name is Stephennie Mulder, I represent myself, and I am opposed to all versions of SB 37. I am faculty in Art & Art History and Middle Eastern Studies and I oppose this bill because its limits on the teaching of ethnicity and religion would chill students' freedom to discuss the complex history of the Middle East, a region that is vital to U.S. national security.
Among professors of Islamic art I am somewhat unique in that I've lived and worked both in Tel Aviv and Tehran. I have also lived, worked, and traveled in countries as diverse as Yemen, Egypt, Turkey, and Lebanon, and I have family, friends, and colleagues in all those countries. For 12 years, I also worked as an archaeologist in Syria, where I excavated an early Islamic palace. That research was recognized by an NEH Fellowship, one of the most prestigious grants a scholar can receive in the humanities. Last year, I developed an Arabic-English video game based on our excavation, and I'm deeply committed to making the history of this critical region accessible to the students of Texas and the public.
I teach a class called History of the Modern Middle East in 100 Objects. Among those 100 objects are two pieces of headgear: the kova tembel and the keffiyyah, symbols of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, two objects that play a crucial role in the history of the region. I regularly have Jewish and Muslim students in my classes, and as you can imagine, the challenge of getting those students to speak to each other is not simple. Conversations are often difficult. Yet somehow, the lens of these familiar objects enables a kind of humanization. The work I do in the classroom to facilitate those conversations pays off year after year as students take the risk to open up and explore the histories of students whose experience is different from their own.
The space of openness and collaboration in that classroom is a sacred trust that I strive to create semester after semester. SB 37's stipulation preventing discussion of religion, ethnicity, and politics would essentially erase that conversation from our campus, leaving Texas students ignorant about a region in which the United States has been deeply involved for over a hundred years, one that is essential to our national security. Academic freedom is central to critical thinking on our higher ed campuses, and is vital for all students, including conservative students. I urge you to vote against this catastrophic bill. The freedom to learn this complex history should be a fundamental right for all Texas students.

Rene Resendiz
Self
San Marcos, TX

I ask the committee to vote NO on this bill. Putting higher education schools under government control would needlessly restrict academic growth in Texas, as this would essentially censor professors within their own fields. Higher education schools do no need to be micromanaged, they need to be properly funded so that future generations are properly prepared for life outside of academia. Such preparations would entail that people are exposed to a wide variety of disciplines from all over the world. A coordinating board would make this task difficult at best and impossible at worst if the values of the board are not the same as those from faculty. Lastly, I implore you all to think: we are already suffering from teacher shortages due to the high and unreasonable demands from government-led programs in k-12. Can Texas really afford to do the same with it's college professors? Not to mention that it needlessly creates a new expenditure in front of a federal government that is currently trying to "save as much as possible". Everything about this plan is simply unreasonable.

Aaron Lack
Self
Austin, TX

This bill will weaken Texas higher education not strengthen it. I have taught at a university for 15 years. Faculty governance is essential for institutional credibility and student outcomes.

SB37 is a sweeping bill that gives political appointees control over what students can learn in courses— muzzling faculty expertise and censoring critical thought— along with specific restrictions on discussions of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, religion, and social beliefs anywhere on campus.

SB 37 dismantles shared governance and due process, allowing political appointees to act unilaterally to block faculty hiring; shut down degree programs; and control the faculty senate. The bill requires political appointees to approve or disallow ads to hire tenured faculty in key fields like education, liberal arts, and social work.

SB 37 creates an “Ombudsman Office” to enforce SB 37. This Thought Police is empowered to fire faculty and defund entire institutions, thereby chilling free inquiry on campuses.

SB37 creates a statewide committee appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House to streamline the number and content of courses in the core curriculum required for Associate and Bachelor degrees.

Monique Joseph
Self
Houston, TX

What you need to realize is that the evil that drives you to create and implement such hateful laws will eventually harm you and your people. You will not always have power, and we all reap what we sow. I advise you move in love over hate and fear. Hate and fear never work out in the long run. Be on the right side of history. It's okay to admit you messed up, and you have time to fix your mistakes. Let your logic drive your motives, not your emotions!

Dana Azurin
Self
Pflugerville, TX

This bill is awful. Why would approve this? Our state universities are top tier and this bill and it's provisions would dismantle that legacy. Vote NO.

Lorenzo Salinas
Self
Woodbranch, TX

As a public policy professional and social worker committed to advancing equitable and evidence-based policymaking in Texas, I write to express serious concern with Senate Bill 37 (SB 37), which proposes an unprecedented shift in the governance and functioning of Texas public institutions of higher education. While I support strong oversight and a focus on student outcomes, SB 37 goes beyond accountability. It politicizes academic spaces, weakens faculty input, and threatens educational access for underserved communities.

This bill removes meaningful shared governance by transferring sweeping authority to governing boards and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Sections 51.315 and 51.316 introduce review mechanisms that tie the fate of degree programs to narrow return on investment metrics. This approach devalues degrees in fields like education, social work, and the arts. These fields are critical to Texas' civic and social infrastructure but may not produce high short-term wages. Closing or weakening these programs based on economic data alone ignores their long-term value and impact, especially in communities with complex needs.

Additionally, the restructuring of faculty senates outlined in Section 51.3522 imposes arbitrary limits and political oversight that undermine academic freedom. By restricting faculty councils to an advisory role and prohibiting them from speaking publicly on issues not explicitly assigned to them, SB 37 silences faculty voices and places a chill on intellectual discourse. As someone who has benefited from mentorship and instruction by Texas faculty, I find this particularly troubling. We cannot ask educators to prepare students for civic life while simultaneously discouraging them from participating in public conversations themselves.

SB 37 also undermines institutional autonomy by expanding the power of state officials and introducing a new Ombudsman office (Section 51.031) with the authority to investigate and penalize institutions based on complaints that could be politically motivated. The threat of funding restrictions for noncompliance, particularly when "compliance" is linked to ideologically driven definitions of value or acceptable speech, raises concerns about academic censorship and partisan intrusion into higher education.

As someone who has worked closely with students, faculty, and community leaders, I know how important it is to protect institutions as spaces for learning, growth, and dissent. SB 37 erodes that foundation. It risks pushing talented faculty out of the state, narrowing the range of ideas students are exposed to, and undermining the social mission of public higher education in Texas.

I urge lawmakers to reconsider the broad scope and long-term implications of this legislation. Our state's future depends not just on economic metrics but on cultivating informed, critical thinkers who can lead in every field, not only those deemed profitable.

Laurie Duke
Self
Fort Worth, TX

I ask that SB 37 not be moved out of committee. Our universities must have control over their governance. University faculty is best equipped to govern because they have first hand knowledge and experience. SB 37 is a censorship bill. Limiting opportunities of study, limiting what faculty can say, limiting courses of study etc. SB 37 is a threat to independent and critical thinking of which our democracy and our Constitution demands. It is unacceptable to have the state so heavily involved in the roles universities play in our communities. SB 37 is the death of intellectual freedom and if that is okay with this committee than it is self-serving rather than serving the people of the great state of Texas. Oppose SB 37.

Misty Parker
Self, Professor of Political Science
Portland, TX

I am a multi-generation Texan, originally from Northeast Texas and now living in the Coastal Bend, and I ask you to end this needless assault on our state's institutions. As a professor who teaches Texas and American government at the college level, I lead students through the foundational documents of our state's history. In reading them, it becomes clear how completely out of touch Republicans like Sen. Creighton are from our forefathers. Surely you haven't read them. Surely if you had, you would realize that cannibalizing the very institutions our forefathers shed their blood to build and protect is an unjustifiable sin against this state, causing you to turn away from your erroneous path. Even without the lens of history to view it with, there is little logic in SB 37 and other attacks on our educational system. This and the Senator's failed bill from the previous session are "final solutions" (pun intended) in search of a problem. V.P. Vance's declaration that "professors are enemies of the state" is certainly a belief animating this bill, but does anyone aside from a radical few (oddly enough, all with higher education degrees!) actually believe any of this nonsense? When everyday Texans learn I'm an educator, they thank me; tell me how underpaid and undervalued we are; tell me how much we are valued by the community. When my students leave my classroom at the end of a semester, they thank me for providing them the background knowledge necessary to understand their government; they thank me for giving them opportunities to think critically about the world around them; they thank me for my service. But my State...my state sees me as an enemy, a brainwasher, un-American. It hurts to know that a career that took me 4 years of a Bachelor's degree, 3.5 years of a Master's degree (cause I had to take classes at night while working full time), and 5 years of a Ph.D. to accomplish (not to mention the student debt I've accumulated in the process) causes my State to hate me so much as to invent laws that belittle my earned expertise by micromanaging my classroom, and will ultimately make it more likely I will be sued and/or lose my job (the ultimate goal, to be sure). But what hurts worse than what you're doing to me and my colleagues is what you're doing to all the future Texans who you apparently care for so much as to protect in the womb while robbing them of the institutions built by their ancestors.. Fuck you for the wreckage you are leaving in your wake. Fuck you for refusing to learn your state's history. Fuck you to everyone who votes in favor of this garbage. You deserve no respect and I can only hope justice finds you.

Ryan Brooks, Dr.
self - university professor
Canyon, TX

Hello, my name is Dr. Ryan Brooks. I am an Associate Professor of English at West Texas A&M University, but I am speaking here as a private individual and as a member of the American Association of University Professors. I write to express my opposition to SB 37, a bill that would be devastating to educational liberty in Texas.

Since arriving in the Panhandle in 2015, I have taught first-year writing courses; upper-level undergraduate surveys in American literature; and graduate seminars for our MA program. In each of these courses, I assign texts that grapple with major ethical questions and social conflicts, on issues ranging from the regional to the global. One of my primary educational goals is to encourage students to think and write critically about what they read. If SB 37, with its chilling effect on the open discussion of ideas, were to pass, none of these classes could function properly, as they absolutely depend on such discussions.

In my composition courses, required for freshmen, I encourage students to localize their research and to take a solutions-oriented approach to the industry they plan to enter, resulting, for example, in research papers written by ag-business majors about how farmers should respond to the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer. This argument assumes that depletion is a problem in the first place; could encouraging such a paper thereby make me vulnerable to the ban against advocating a particular “social” belief?

In my literature classes, I assign texts that contend with the idea of what it means to be an American, from the Declaration of Independence through 21st century memoirs about growing up working-class in rural Kansas (a text which prompted one student from a farming background to declare that this was the first time they had ever seen someone like themselves represented in print). I am concerned that, if SB 37 were to pass, I could be accused of encouraging a specific ‘ideology’ just by virtue of assigning these texts. I also assign 20th century writers like T.S. Eliot and Flannery O’Connor, who have been criticized for their racist, antisemitic views and who are both known for their overt religiosity. Could requiring students to read these writers, who are crucial to the history of American literature, make me subject to the whims of a Governing Board that may wish to censor or sanitize this history?

I believe it is worth remembering that liberal-arts faculty are not a monolith; that their goal, in any case, is not to inculcate specific ideologies, but to teach critical thinking and prepare future citizens and professionals; and that college students, including conservative ones, are not children who need to be protected from difficult ideas or from having their assumptions challenged or tested. To best serve the needs of these students, the House Higher Ed Committee should reject the encroachment on educational liberty and local educational control represented by SB 37.

Thank you for your time.

CLAUDIA TORRES-YANEZ
Self
PFLUGERVILLE, TX

I'm concerned about SB 37 and urge voting against it. As an alumni of the University of Texas at Austin, I believe SB 37 threatens my alma mater’s reputation by putting politics above academic standards. In my view, it increases the risk that top professors will no longer be attracted to join the University and those here are more likely to leave, reducing the quality of education and research which hurts all of us. There is no reason to jeopardize Texas’s achievement as a leader in Tier 1 research universities, which would be the outcome of this bill. I believe faculity, as the experts in their fields and teaching, are best positioned to develop the content for their courses. SB 37 sidelines faculty in favor of Governor appointees who are not experts. This is ripe for negative unintended consequences that will hurt students and the future workforce of Texas. SB 37 assumes students are incapable of forming their own conclusions on course topics. A topic can be analyzed from all viewpoints, removing a topic prevents that. This is dangerous to the formation of critical-thinking skills that are necessary to be successful long-term in the global workforce. I'm also concerned that the value of my degree may go down if academic freedom is restricted. SB 37 also promotes wasteful government in community colleges, universities, and health institutions and duplicates what these institutions already do. This bill is unnecessary and an attempt to fix something that is not broken. In fact, you are attempting to break what's made the Texas Miracle possible, please reject SB 37.

Tracie Matysik
self
Austin, TX

I am writing as an individual citizen, representing only my own thoughts. I also teach History at a public university in Texas. As one who teaches the history of Nazism, I am profoundly worried about the effects of SB37. I teach this class as part of the Normandy Scholars Program, in which students take five courses on World War II and then travel to Europe with faculty to see the sites of the war. It is a life-changing experience for most.

Teaching this course is rewarding and challenging. The material is emotional, and it triggers traumatic associations for students. They confront not only the greatest antisemitic crime in history but also issues of systemic racism, eugenics, euthanasia, sexual slavery and exploitation, trauma, and much more. To be equipped to teach this class, I stay in continuous conversation with scholars around the country and around the world, keeping up on the newest research and also on strategies for teaching such hard material. I have to be nimble in the classroom and in structuring the class, able to shift things around in response to students' interests and emotional reactions. Bureaucratic oversight by non-specialists will cripple my ability to teach this course effectively.
Moreover, my expertise in the history of authoritarian societies tells me that authoritarian societies like Nazi Germany regulate what can and cannot be taught in universities. Free societies do not do that. I urge you to drop SB37 and maintain a free society in Texas and at Texas public universities.

Aurelia Rocha, Dr.
Self - faculty and performing artist
San Antonio, TX

SB37 is a sweeping bill that gives political appointees control over what students can learn in courses— muzzling faculty expertise and censoring critical thought— along with specific restrictions on discussions of race, ethnicity, sex, politics, religion, and social beliefs anywhere on campus.

SB 37 dismantles shared governance and due process, allowing political appointees to act unilaterally to block faculty hiring; shut down degree programs; and control the faculty senate. The bill requires political appointees to approve or disallow ads to hire tenured faculty in key fields like education, liberal arts, and social work.

SB 37 creates an "Ombudsman Office" to enforce SB 37. This Thought Police is empowered to fire faculty and defund entire institutions, thereby chilling free inquiry on campuses.

SB37 creates a statewide committee appointed by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House to streamline the number and content of courses in the core curriculum required for Associate and Bachelor degrees.

Caroline Mithoff
Self
Austin, TX

Curriculum decisions belong in the hands of educators, not politicians. Leave our schools alone. Vote no on SB 37.

Ann Pierce
Self/tetired
Houston, TX

I am against SB 37 because governor appointed committees should not be controlling ciriculum of Texas Colleges and Universities.

Dallana Camargo
self
Houston, TX

Public Comment Opposing SB37
I oppose this bill because colleges and universities should remain spaces where individuals can freely choose what they study and engage in open discussions without government restrictions. As a graduate with a degree in Women's Studies, I can say that this education provided a strong foundation for how I serve my community today as a public servant.
University environments allow students to engage with people from different backgrounds and perspectives. That is an essential part of the college experience and a key component of a healthy democracy. Under the First Amendment, we have the right to discuss ideas, even controversial ones, without fear of censorship or limitation by the government.
This bill crosses a line. Students and families are the ones paying tuition and making intentional decisions about their education and future careers. We deserve the freedom to pursue paths that align with our values, goals, and interests. That freedom should not be restricted by political interference. Limiting what can be taught or discussed on college campuses is a direct violation of intellectual freedom, personal choice, and the individual rights that define us as Americans and Texans.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ale Babino, Dr.
Self
Princeton, TX

SB 37 threatens the quality of our higher education by undermining academic freedom. Academic freedom allows universities to follow needed streams of inquiry for the public good. By resisting it through this bill, you not only restrict empirical research but also make Texas become less attractive to the highest talent across fields to teach Texas students.

Kay Campbell, Mrs
Self - homemaker
Fort worth, TX

I am opposed to SB37! I do not understand how government takeover of higher education can be considered positive by representatives who want the best for our students and our state!

Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler, Dr.
self, university professor
Austin, TX

My name is Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler and I am writing in opposition to SB 37. I am a tenured full professor who has taught at Texas State University for forty-two years, and today I am writing for myself and not for any institution or group.
I have spent my career as a teacher and scholar of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature, in particular the works of John Milton and William Shakespeare. When I teach, I emphasize what I see as a fundamental reason to study imaginative literature of the past: to understand how the world occurred for the writers and how perceptions change over time. I always explain to students that understanding a work or writer does not mean agreeing with what they say, and that students should assume that my choice of readings is not driven by advocacy of, or opposition to, a particular point of view. In both my teaching and research, I practice what I do advocate: that we understand any subject better when we pay attention to and take seriously the words of those with whom we disagree. I ask myself and my students to consider both what writers are saying and why they think so. Answering these questions helps readers understand why such writers as Milton and Shakespeare continue to be read and to inspire both readers and other artists.
My long experience with college teaching makes me deeply concerned with the implications of SB 37, especially the vagueness of its language. Should this bill become law, will I need to rethink whether to teach Shakespeare's comedies, which have many sexual references and which sometimes include cross-dressing? Will I be able to teach Othello, which among other issues concerns itself with race? Will I be able to teach Milton at all, since reading Paradise Lost inevitably requires some attention to Milton's individualistic Christian faith, and reading his prose works, such as Areopagitica, inevitably requires some discussion of politics and social beliefs? Both authors are read and studied all over the world and are recognized for their significance to Western culture. Once we acknowledge that most enduring works of world literature (including the Bible) contain material that will upset some people, which works would SB 37 allow?
Please vote no.

My name is Elizabeth Skerpan-Wheeler and I am writing in opposition to SB 37. I am a tenured full professor who has taught at Texas State University for forty-two years, and today I am writing for myself and not for any institution or group.
I have spent my career as a teacher and scholar of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature, in particular the works of John Milton and William Shakespeare. When I teach, I emphasize what I see as a fundamental reason to study imaginative literature of the past: to understand how the world occurred for the writers and how perceptions change over time. I always explain to students that understanding a work or writer does not mean agreeing with what they say, and that students should

Arnold Grothues
Laid off/retired
Arlington, TX

As an attorney, I believe this is an unconstitutional bill seeking to mandate and impose a particular political view on faculty and students in Texas. This reeks of communist Soviet (and Putin-like) political persecution.

Amanda Ellis
Self
Midland, TX

I am extremely opposed to this bill. This will hinder public universities in Texas. College students should have the chance to hear information and make up their own mind on what to believe.
As a life long republican, the creation of another government office that will require funding by tax payers is ridiculous.
Vote NO on this bill!!!

Brian Williams
Self
Cedar Park, TX

As a concerned Texas citizen and parent, I strongly urge our legislators to reject Senate Bill 37. This bill represents an unprecedented government overreach into our public universities that threatens the quality and independence of higher education in our state.

I believe in accountability and efficiency in our educational institutions, but SB37 goes far beyond reasonable oversight. By centralizing power in the hands of politically-appointed governing boards while diminishing the voice of educational experts, this bill risks transforming our universities from centers of excellence and innovation into institutions subject to political whims.

The proposed "credential of value" system reduces education to a simple financial calculation, ignoring the immeasurable benefits that come from a well-rounded education across disciplines. As a parent, I want my children to have access to diverse educational opportunities that foster critical thinking and creativity, not just programs deemed financially profitable by state authorities.

The establishment of an Ombudsman with investigative powers creates what amounts to a political enforcement arm within our educational system. This opens the door to intimidation and censorship that has no place in institutions dedicated to the free exchange of ideas.

Our universities have thrived through a delicate balance of oversight and academic independence. This bill dismantles that balance, inserting unnecessary governmental control into decisions best left to educators, administrators, and academic experts who understand the complex educational environment.

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 37 and instead work with educational stakeholders to develop more balanced approaches to university governance that respect both fiscal responsibility and academic independence. Our children's future, and the future competitiveness of Texas, depends on universities that remain strongholds of innovation, critical thinking, and educational excellence.

Robbyn Pope
Self, STEM Educator
Houston, TX

Please vote NO for SB 37!
Why should the future of Texas (our children and grandchildren) YOUR CONSTITUENTS have their higher learning be censored by those who were elected to create laws that benefit our society? Censorship at institutions of higher learning is not beneficial, but harmful to the citizens of Texas. We want our children, whether they are in liberal arts, STEM, business, or social sciences, to have the ability to make decisions about what classes they take, and what they think about the classes they take. What if I am in a course and I do not agree with what is being said? I can as an intelligent person take part in meaningful and respectful discourse in that classroom, withdraw from that course, or make the department chairpersons aware of what is taking place. Is the great state of Texas attempting to create a society in which every subject matter that is taught should be unilaterally agreed upon. It is insulting to every Texan to have a small group of individuals to decide what should be offered as a learning opportunity. A learning opportunity to learn how to disagree, and to learn that people who love the same university can have different experiences and perspectives.
When a matriculating woman or man walks across the stage to receive her or his degree in Texas, we want the degree to be held in high regard. Yes, the graduate did take the number of courses in various areas that satisfied the requirements. But, did the state of Texas develop a THINKER? A PROBLEM SOLVER? Many courses that are offered at a university might not directly impact the economic outlook of our state, but they do impact how fellow employees, public servants, leaders of corporations work together to solve problems that they will encounter throughout their careers. Do the academic credentials, teaching philosophies, research, or peer reviews of professors mean anything in Texas anymore? Please allow the administration, faculty and student body influence what is being taught. The universities in our great state already have a system in place, which uses the specialization of labor, to determine what classes should be offered to the student body.
Texas' future will continue to be promising if we allow the students who attend these universities to determine whether the information that they receive from a course is valid. We need to teach our society how to perform 'due diligence' and think before accepting information as truth.
Again, please vote NO for SB 37!

Jane Van Praag, Ms.
self, retired from UT-Austin
Bartlett, TX 76511-0354, TX

Against SB 37. Entirely opposite of what the term 'education' means.

JAMES GALLAGHER
self
JONESTOWN, TX

Stop harassing our outstanding Texas Universities. Stop politicizing higher education and oppose this bill.

Diego Vigil Alas
Self
Harlingen, TX

The UTRGV promotes it's Mexican American identity while also doing very little to protect it's students and faculty. I understand funding is important, but if it complies with legislation I don't want my university to misrepresent what it stands for. Also our mascot is a vaquero which is ironic

Matthew Morrison
Self. Librarian
Fort Worth, TX

SB 37 would do nothing to improve education in the state of Texas. Indeed, it would create another level of bureaucracy to hinder the basic operations of already overtaxed departments and take power away from professional educators in favor of an unelected committee of political appointees. It is clear from this past weekend's election that the people of Texas want greater local control of their schools and reject the failed policies of conservatism and anti-DEI policies. The committee would do well to remember this before voting.

Tabitha Morton, Dr.
self-educator
Spring, TX

I write to you as a proud alumna of Texas A&M University. My professional and personal growth are rooted in the strength of this system. Senate Bill 37 poses a serious threat to that foundation.
SB 37 would grant the governing board sweeping authority to overturn decisions made by campus administrations. This is not oversight—it is overreach. The bill strips institutions of their autonomy and places them into a state of indefinite receivership, with ultimate decision-making in the hands of political appointees. Such centralization undermines the academic integrity, operational efficiency, and innovation that define quality higher education.
Our universities are not failing. Texas institutions lead in research, workforce development, and community service. Allowing political interference in decisions around faculty hiring, curriculum, and student services will diminish our ability to attract and retain talented professionals and scholars. Academic excellence will be compromised by short-term political agendas.
The consequences for HBCUs like Prairie View A&M University (PVAM) would be especially damaging. HBCUs already face structural challenges—historic underfunding, limited resources, and higher accountability demands. SB 37 adds yet another layer of unnecessary scrutiny, one that could be used to further marginalize or politicize our institutional missions. PVAMU’s ability to support historically underserved communities depends on flexibility and innovation. This bill would tie our hands.
HBCUs need support and autonomy to fulfill their roles in creating equitable educational pathways. Instead, SB 37 invites ideologically motivated interventions that threaten the progress we’ve made in student success, faculty development, and academic leadership.
I urge you to consider the long-term damage this bill could inflict. Weakening institutional governance in favor of political control will not strengthen higher education in Texas—it will hobble it.
Please vote no on SB 37.

Kelly Inselmann
self
Austin, TX

Please do not allow appointed political people to be in charge of curriculum, what can be taught or discussed in classes, or in charge of hiring. The reason UT is considered a public Ivy is BECAUSE of the faculty and scholarship and free thought and faculty leadership that exist. Please do not agree to political lackeys having authority that faculty and administrators should share. Please save the quality of our Texas higher education. As the parents a 17 year old Junior, I respectfully request you don't mess with Texas. Thank you.

lynne walters
self/professor
The Woodlands, TX

I am a recently retired professor who taught at three universities in Texas -- University of Houston, Sam Houston State, and Texas A&M. I was on the Aggie faculty for 30+ years. I am proud to have spent my academic career in this State, as Texas universities are recognized throughout the world for excellence in teaching, research, and service. SB 37, which you will consider on May 6, threatens our universities' reputation, It will undermine their ability to attract top leaders, faculty, and students, and scholars and to provide young Texans with the education they need to drive our economy. SB 37 would impose a series of burdensome and punitive measures that will stifle critical thinking, undermine shared governance, and politicize higher education. These changes create an environment of fear and self-censorship, ultimately harming students and debilitating the intellectual vitality and academic integrity of Texas universities. I urge you to vote against this bill and others like it aimed at diminishing academic and intellectual freedom at the State's finest institutions.

Brenda Sendejo, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

Against. Wasteful spending of tax dollars. This bill will duplicate existing accountability systems. I pay a lot of taxes and this is absurd.

Kenneth Burkins
Self
Houston, TX

I am a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin (BSME ‘94). I am opposed to SB37. This Bill threatens the reputation of universities by putting politics above academic standards. Top professors may leave the university and it may be difficult to attract top professors thus reducing the quality of education and research.

Rachel Preston
self/teacher
Austin, TX

I urge the committee to reject this bill. It should not have even been considered given the way it seeks to remove all control from the hands of our universities in what they do. I support our universities rights to determine what they teach and how, and what degree plans should and should not be offered.

Teresa Cuevas, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

Wasteful duplication of government staffing and spending for existing accountability systems that already work!

Ann Moulding, Dr.
Collin College
Richardson, TX

Please forward my opposition to HB37 to the Higher Education Committee. Governance of our educational curriculum is best done from the educators and experts delivering this content. While there needs to be some balance to radical agendas within some institutions, the vague language of the requirements of SB 37 will make it cumbersome to engage students with the diverse voices that help them develop critical thinking skills and thoughtful opinions.

Chevonne Johst
Parent
Pflugerville, TX

I am submitting my opposition to SB 37 and ask that the committee oppose it as well.
Texas SB37 is a sweeping bill that:
-prevents faculty from having final decision-making authority in any hiring decisions
-gives political appointees control over what students learn in courses;
-limits discussions on race, sex, ethnicity, politics, religion, and social beliefs;
-restricts faculty hiring in liberal arts and related fields
-dismantles shared governance and due process
-fires faculty and defunds institutions that violate SB 37
-empowers the Governor, Lt. Governor, and House Speaker to redesign the core curriculum for all Associate and Bachelors degrees.

Education decisions should be made by the institution. Higher education should not be censored on what they can teach nor should their departments, offerings, or hiring be controlled by our speaker or top state leaders and risk funding. This is overreach in every way and we need to respect our educators and trust their expertise. Please oppose this bill.

Laura Miller
self/substitute teacher
Austin, TX

I understand that this bill is attempting to keep public colleges accountable but I have concerns about the newly created governing committees and state's ability to eliminate courses.
These committees have control and power over the faculty that risks breeding a culture of distrust and fear in our colleges. Fear is not conducive to learning or working. An inhospitable work place pushes good professors to private institutions where the faculty do not fear for their jobs, and do not have their classrooms controlled and monitored. Professors will be constantly worried their course will be cancelled and not teach the variety of perspectives the bill actually says it wants to protect. I have two young adults in college now and I want them to learn in a place where the faculty feels free to teach without someone looking over their shoulder. That freedom of thought is what gives a teacher creativity and spark and joy for the subject they are teaching. I want my college students' career to be positive and full of choices about what they learn. Please oppose this bill because the fear it creates could destroy the spirit of our universities.

Julie Luker
Myself
San Antonio, TX

Political interference in higher education is a terrible idea. I find every point of this bill to be anethema to a free and open society.

Sarah Stayer, Dr.
Self- physician
Austin, TX

I am a doctor. I teach Health Equity at Dell Medical School. We learn how there are measurable differences in how often heart attacks are a missed diagnosis in women, how strokes are more common in the Black population, how patients with disabilities, or who have plus sized bodies, are not taken as seriously in the medical problems, causing potentially life threatening delays. These are the lives of Texans that are on the line.

We live in a world where biases and assumptions exist. And without data, we can't see them. Learning about these differences helps us medically make more accurate diagnoses and save lives of Texans in our community.

We even studied what physicians in training thought about our curriculum, and more than 90% of them thought that learning about health equity was a critical part of being a physician.

One quote included, "this curriculum helped me stop blaming the patients for being sick."

Brian Cabral
Self
Austin, TX

My name is Brian Cabral. I submit this public testimony for myself in my capacity as a private Texan citizen and not on behalf of an organization or institution. I am a faculty member of education at the University of Texas at Austin and have been for the past year. I write to strongly and vehemently oppose SB37.

We must be very clear about the dangerous new precedent being placed on the voting floor regarding Texas colleges and universities, where expert and decorated faculty are stripped of their ability to engage in shared governance for decisions made, discussed, and altered. Instead, SB37, as is now becoming widely known, intends to construct an unbalanced state-based and appointed council to oversee matters related to curriculum, hiring, programming, and degree programs, among other associated elements that compose institutionalized university and collegiate affairs. Frankly, the intention behind SB37 is evidently not to strengthen faculty's ability to ensure that Texas remains a leading competitor at a national and international scale, but to fundamentally overhaul our shared power and independence in being able to participate in governance and decision-making position that shapes how we properly and competitively educate students, especially Texan students.

SB37 has also erroneously framed the curricula work we do as faculty as 'too ideological' and a form of 'indoctrination.' This could not be further from the truth. The broader Texas political agenda regarding education across pK-16 is one reflecting a singular conservative partisan ideology, which intends to narrow alternative perspectives that are not aligned with this longstanding ideology being pushed across various public and private domains in Texas. I teach histories, contexts, and foundations of U.S. public schooling primarily to future teachers who intend to join the cadre of Texan public schoolteachers soon. They come to UT Austin hungry for curriculum that will feed their ability to think, teach, and write critically about the conditions of school, teaching, and education. Time and again, students throughout pK-12 have been spoon-fed specific narratives, histories, and curricular tools that kept them underprepared for their chosen professions. Students themselves articulate that this is not what they want nor need. Our duties as faculty, inclusive of our shared independence to determine curriculum, is to ensure their preparation involves full nutritious preparation (or meals, to follow the analogy of starvation here). SB37 prevents us from being able to adequately prepare (and feed) our students and we must not continue these faulty attempts at starving our Texan universities and colleges.

In conjunction with our collective intentions to maintain Texas a stronghold of critical, robust, and meaningful educational experience at the tertiary level, I urge you to practice your due diligence to Texans and our students/faculty on the matter of SB37 and reject it.
Zip: 78702

J M, Mr.
Self
Denton, TX

SB37 harms our education system independence and our future. Please vote against SB37

Rosemary Candelario
self, professor
AUSTIN, TX

My name is Dr. Rosemary Candelario. I am an Associate Professor with 13 years of work experience at two different public universities in Texas. I oppose SB 37.
My specialty over the past 13 years has been in graduate education. I have been lucky to teach in two renowned programs at two different public universities in Texas that both attract competitive applications from across the country and around the world. Texas has more top-tier research universities than any other state because faculty and students have the academic freedom to teach, question, and discover, and not in spite of it. Academic freedom is central to critical thinking on our higher ed campuses, and vital for all faculty and students, no matter their political leaning.

Make no mistake: if SB 37 passes, Texas institutions of higher education will lose current faculty and students, and will no longer be able to recruit the best and brightest faculty and students. My current students are already scared that they won't be able to conduct the research they came here to do. Some of this year's applicants chose programs in other states because they worried about the same. And I have already witnessed faculty not applying for our open positions because they felt their teaching and research would be constrained in Texas. And this was all before SB 37.

Over-regulating higher ed will not spur excellence -- it will do just the opposite. SB 37 will drive professors out of Texas, hurt students, weaken research, and destroy the world-class reputation of our institutions and degree programs.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 37.

Lina Del Castillo, Dr
Self associate professor
Austin, TX

This bill infringes upon academic freedom by increasing state control over curriculum and potentially limiting the range of topics taught. Rather than promoting excellence, this bill will lead to inefficient processes, undermine democratic processes, and will foreclose educational liberty and student choice.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Board of Regents already provide significant oversight to ensure compliance in our colleges and universities.

By reducing faculty senates to only tenured faculty, who make up a minority of the faculty workforce, this bill undermines any semblance of democratic deliberation within faculty senates.

This bill also seeks to eliminate minors and certificate programs that politicians (not students or faculty) determine are under enrolled. Certificates and minors cost virtually nothing to offer. But offering fewer undermines a student's ability to seek the credentials they believe are beat for them and their individual career track.

Helena Fregia
Self/Academic Advisor
Farmers Branch, TX

I am writing to the Committee on Higher Education to express my displeasure with the contents of SB 37. As a graduate, employee, and current student of Texas institutions of higher education, SB 37 and the accompanying HB 4499 would cause undo hardship on institutions to provide quality education to TX students and would greatly reduce our national and global reputation as a prestigious place for scholars to be educated. These bills allow for a gross over reach of the state government into higher education and will greatly impact the ability of faculty and administrators to do their jobs. It is completely hypocritical coming from a group of I would assume "small government" conservatives. Not only due to my current employment status in higher education, but as a married white woman of child-bearing age, I think it is completely disgusting that the state of Texas continues to make decisions that make me less likely to have children and remain in the state of Texas. I would much rather see my elected officials and tax dollars going to more accessible and quality public K-12 and higher education, healthcare (especially for women and children), and access to fresh food, rather than time wasted on government-controlled public education while private education is subsidized, continuing the fight to stay the least-insured state in the nation with some of the highest maternal mortality, and food deserts continuing to grow while fewer and fewer people qualify for SNAP or EBT benefits.

Michael Belsick
Fredericksburg Tea Party
Fredericksburg, TX

FOR SB 37

Cheryl Harris, Mrs.
Self/piano teacher
Arlington, TX

I’m against this bill for several reasons. It is vaguely written so that almost any mention of an issue, such as the existence of gay and transgender people, could be considered promoting an ideology and prohibited. Also, I think it gives the legislature far too much power to Control what is taught in universities based on political agendas. Universities should be places for the free flow of ideas - Not just the ones preferred by the party in power.

Kimberley Baker
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc
Houston, TX

This is a bad bill. Unless a legislator is an educator, there's no expertise or training on creating curriculum that will impact our state now and into the future. Legislators, stay in your lane; make policy NOT police what can and cannot be taught in schools, esp. higher education or even public schools. Collegiates should have the unfettered choice of what they want to or NOT to learn. The very essence of the Lone Star State is being a maverick and citizens exercising their free will AND thoughts on how to live our lives. Legislators, Stay In Your Lane!!!!
SB37 Public Comments Talking Points:

-SB 37 shifts control of university curriculum to political appointees instead of faculty.

-It creates vague rules about "distorting history" that could silence honest teaching.

-Professors with decades of experience would lose decision-making power.

-Texas has built strong public universities — this bill could weaken them.

-Students need to learn from multiple perspectives to succeed in diverse workplaces.

-Faculty must be able to adapt their teaching to support all students, including those with different learning needs.
Why don't legislators do what we send them to the Capitol to do:
Make our lives better thru policies that stimulate job growth and economic development
Help cut prices on groceries, food
Incentivize our farmers and key industries like hospitality, energy, healthcare, etc
Power Grid - get us on the national grid, so a summer squall doesn't knock our electricity out for a whole week
Protect us - reasonable gun control. Why should ple be able to bring guns into Church; movies; groceries, etc.
Infrastructure! Infrastructure! Infrastructure!
Stay in your lane. The Lone Star State would be better for it!!!

Beverly Contreras
Self
San Antonio, TX

This bill goes against academic freedom! Students have the right to study or not study whatever they want, we should not have elected officials making decisions on what we can and cannot learn. This is not a forced education, this is an education we seek and pay for. This bill not only hurts students but also hurts educators/academics and scholars. This bill strips our freedoms and rights to seek knowledge and history and share that knowledge and history. Ironically enough the people in power will give more rights to guns and gun owners in the name of "freedom" and "small government" but will continue to try to strip the rights and freedoms of Texas residence when it doesn't fit their narrow politics. Stop this bill now!!

Anthony Elmo
Retired
Fort Worth, TX

this bill is terrible and is a government takeover of higher education. another "win" for this "conservative" legislature. mind your own business.

BILL KING
self - retired judge
4507 Shoal Creek Blvd Austin, TX

I guess this bill is an improvement over the times of Galileo when the dominant church tried to control all of science, literature and arts.

You are not talking about elementary students; you are talking about high school graduates enrolled in one of the many first class colleges in Texas. When I went to college 50 years ago after graduating from an excellent public high school, I wanted to learn new things. I wanted to broaden my knowledge of the world and learn the many different perspectives people had about the world. And the point was not just to get a job. The point was to expand what I knew and who I was. To give a board of commissars (who are not educators and with no expertise in the fields they are reviewing) the power to decide what is appropriate for adults to learn and, more importantly, get to decide who is qualified to present the material that the commissars know little about will only lead to the dumbing down of students.

Businesses are looking to hire the brightest, best educated graduates they can find. If the businesses can not find them in Texas, they will not hesitate to look elsewhere.

Please leave education to the people who know how to educate. Vote NO on SB 37.

Jonathan Cortez, Dr.
self
Robstown, TX

My name is Jonathan Cortez, Ph.D., and I speak as a private citizen and alumnus of the University of Texas at Austin, Class of 2015. I write in strong opposition to SB 37 and all its iterations.

I arrived at UT Austin in 2011 from Robstown, a small South Texas town, eager to learn and grow. It was there—thanks to the expertise of faculty in U.S. history, immigration history, and Mexican American studies—that I began to see the broader world critically. My K–12 education had offered a sanitized version of history, leaving me ill-equipped for the rigor and complexity of college discourse. Faculty at UT reversed that disservice. They taught me how to think, not what to think.
SB 37 would undermine that very foundation. By threatening faculty independence and governance, this bill would degrade the quality of student learning and undercut college readiness across Texas.

In 2015, I was among the first graduates of the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies. I earned B.A. degrees in both Sociology and Mexican American Studies and was honored as one of the twelve Dean's Distinguished Graduates from the College of Liberal Arts. I also completed two honors theses—one on the sociological effects of a 2011 Texas education bill and one on Mexican American history in South Texas. These accomplishments made me highly competitive for graduate school, where I later earned my Ph.D. from Brown University.

None of this would have been possible without UT Austin's faculty, whose academic freedom shaped my education. My very first course—"Sexual Violence Across the U.S.–Mexico Border"—was eye-opening. It introduced me to histories systematically excluded from K–12 curricula and inspired my ongoing academic path. The knowledge I gained at UT was not only intellectual—it was empowering.

SB 37 is a direct attack on that empowerment. It would silence professors, strip faculty of autonomy, and put curricular control in the hands of people with no training or connection to the disciplines they seek to restrict. This is akin to giving a tech billionaire control of the federal budget—uninformed, undemocratic, and reckless.
Further, SB 37 threatens Texas's global standing. Without academic freedom, Texas will no longer be a magnet for top-tier scholars or graduate students. This will damage classroom experiences and long-term innovation across the state.

I urge you in the strongest terms to reject all versions of SB 37.

Daniel Dawer
Self
Austin, TX

I am a proud graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, one of our state's flagship public universities. I'm writing in strong opposition to Senate Bill 37, which threatens the very foundation of higher education in Texas.

SB 37 is not about academic excellence or accountability—it's about censorship. By restricting how faculty can teach about race, gender, inequality, and U.S. history, this bill compromises students' ability to think critically and engage with the full complexity of our world. As a UT alum, I can say with certainty that the most valuable parts of my education came from professors who challenged me, who exposed me to difficult truths, and who prepared me to live and lead in a diverse, democratic society.

This bill sends a chilling message to faculty and students alike: some histories, perspectives, and communities are unwelcome in Texas classrooms. It invites politically motivated oversight, punishes dissent, and puts our public universities at risk of losing top talent. It undermines trust in our institutions and opens the door to meritless complaints, reputational harm, and funding threats.

The truth is not partisan. Students deserve access to rigorous, honest, and inclusive education. That's what makes our universities strong. SB 37 does not protect students—it limits them. It does not support learning—it silences it.

I urge you to reject this dangerous bill and affirm your commitment to academic freedom and educational integrity in Texas.

Ximena Pena
Self
San Antonio, TX

Education and knowledge should not be restrained. Higher education should not be limited.

Gabrielle Gonzales
Representing myself. I am a lecturer
San Antonio, TX

Protect public education. Defend public institutions. We do not need more censorship, disguised as support, we have the right to our academic freedoms.

Jeff Sharp
self
Dripping Springs, TX

Please vote NO on this bill! Higher Education must not be policed by politicians.

Leva Mokhtari
Self
Austin, TX

Greetings esteemed members of the committee. My name is Leva Mokhtari and I am a Social Work student with concerns about Senate Bill 37.

I recognize that this bill is proposed with the intent of improving higher education in Texas, and we share a common goal: ensuring students can meaningfully contribute to the future of our state. During my time in college, my courses have challenged me to examine our history, engage with people from different backgrounds and grow both in my ability to think critically and move with compassion. In my experience, courses like Social Welfare History and Families & Intimate Relationships, designed and taught by experienced Social Work faculty, are not vehicles for division— they are essential training for students like me to address real-world issues thoughtfully and effectively. The ability to analyze, question, and understand the world around us is not a political objective, it's an educational one.

When professors help design curriculum, they ensure that students like me are equipped to navigate the realities of the world we are entering. S.B. 37 shifts decision-making away from the faculty who are experts in their fields and closest to the learning experience. Removing faculty voices from governance risks turning our universities into places of compliance instead of curiosity. This bill dismisses expertise and sends a message that students' educational experience is secondary to politics.

While private universities will continue to attract top faculty and research funding through shared governance, public institutions would be burdened by compliance rules that restrict academic freedom. This could set back recruitment, reduce grant competitiveness, and drive away talent from both faculty and students. We can't afford for Texas universities to become less attractive to prospective students and high-achieving researchers by limiting what can be taught or who gets to shape the curriculum.

I am not asking you to agree with every perspective offered on a college campus. I am asking you to protect the conditions that make learning real and robust. Education works best when it's driven by inquiry, not ideology — on either side. Let's not undermine what makes Texas schools places of growth. I urge you to let students like me grow into who I need to be to better serve our communities and reject S.B. 37.

Jelisa Boykin, Dr.
Self, psychologist
Houston, TX

This bill could weaken the strength of the Universities Texas has built. The university and its faculties should be in control of its curricula and have the ability to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of ALL students The future of our economy is based on how versatile our students can be in the workforce. Limiting students' ability to learn about multiple perspectives places the entire state at a disadvantage by stifling the productive growth of our state's brightest scholars. Vote no to SB 37 and support the growth of Texas's future.

Matt Giani
Self (professor at UT Austin)
Austin, TX

I completed a PhD in Educational Policy and Planning from UT Austin because I believe deeply in the power of education generally and higher education specifically to lift individuals out of poverty, promote social mobility, and contribute to a vibrant and dynamic economy and society. At a time when higher education and the scientific, artistic, and cultural excellence it produces is under sustained attack, I believe it is imperative for policymakers to ensure that higher education is valued, supported, and defended. If not, I worry that students, researchers, and faculty members will seek other states and colleges where higher education is more greatly valued. Unfortunately, SB 37 contains a number of provisions that are damaging to students, faculty members, and institutions of higher education. Governments should ensure higher education programs provide value to students, and my research agenda has centered on examining the value of educational programs. But creating a rating system for programs without an agreed upon, valid, and reliable methodology for doing so - particularly one that fails to recognize the non-monetary values of higher education - has the potential to disproportionately burden programs that prepare workers for valuable but lower wage occupations in fields like the arts, social work, and education. The singling out of fields related to "liberal arts, communications, education, and social work" in the provision on governing board authority to approve or deny postings and hirings for tenured positions similarly targets fields for their philosophical, political, and disciplinary orientation, preventing hiring decisions from being based on merit. The provision to allow the removal of members of faculty councils or senates "for political advocacy" must be more clearly defined to prevent dismissals based on political views in ways that would violate citizens' right to free speech. Perhaps most ironically and destructively, SB 37 both upends long-established norms and principles related to shared governance, prioritizing the views of politically-appointed representatives over the disciplinarily informed expertise of scientists and scholars in regards to what students should learn, how it should be taught, and who is qualified to teach it. I am deeply saddened to say that I have increasingly begun to counsel my graduate mentees pursuing education - many of which I am confident will make incredible contributions to scholarship and society - to explore professional opportunities outside of Texas because of how aggressively the Texas Legislature is seeking to regulate the content and character of higher education in Texas, particularly through these revisions contained in SB 37.

Ana Luisa Salas-Porras
SELF
Austin, TX

I strongly urge the committee to VOTE NO. This is yet another example of allowing untrained people to direct educational curriculum & degree programs. When did it become okay to substitute expertise with people without any training in education? Our Texas higher education schools have become well- respected precisely because experienced Educators are making curriculum decisions. Texas legislators seem to think anyone can design, write & implement curriculum & design degree programs. The results of this thinking is obvious in Texas as our schools decline under draconian, extremist regulations passed by extremists in the Lege. Stop this thinking! Let experts design curriculum & degree programs. Keep excellence Texas schools by keeping unqualified individuals out of curriculum & degree program design. VOTE NO!

Susan Stewart
self
Pflugerville, TX

i OPPOSE this bill. This is the state take over of higher education in Texas, by ideologues who believe public schools provide litter boxes to students. This bill proposes significant changes, including the establishment of statewide committees to evaluate curricula, undermining academic freedom. Texas universities are the envy of the entire world, and many come here seeking a degree from one of our esteemed institutions. Many stay here to further the research on various issues, thereby improving life and health of many of us. This bill seeks to turn those institutions into nothing more than propaganda outlets. Something that occurred in Germany in the 1930s. This bill is a frontal attack on free thought and speech in Texas. VOTE NO ON THIS HEINOUS BILL

Julie Sears, Dr.
Self
Richardson, TX

As a former full-time college professor and a current part-time writing tutor, I understand the necessity of allowing faculty to have the freedom to make decisions about how to best teach their subjects and to have meaningful input on their institutions. SB 37 will strip faculty of their authority over curriculum and campus policies, affecting what programs and courses are available to students. This is a blatant attack on academic freedom. Vote no on this attempt to undermine education.

Rachel Ozanne, Dr.
Self, history professor
Austin, TX

My name is Rachel Ozanne. My comments today are my own as a private citizen and do not represent the views of any group or organization. I write to OPPOSE SB 37. I am a product of Texas public schools, and I believe that my success represents the best that Texas public schools have offered to its students. I earned a high school diploma in Dallas and then earned a BA, MA, and PhD from the University of Texas at Austin. I am now a US history professor at Texas public university, a position that I have held full-time for 6 years. I am concerned about what SB 37 would mean for future Texas students and scholars. This bill could do at least two damaging things to higher education in Texas: 1. it could deprive faculty and universities of the opportunity to participate in making decisions about their institutions' curriculum and staffing--meaning that their expertise as knowledge and administrative experts could not be applied. Faculty have been guiding Texas universities in shared governance with the legislature and boards of regents, and they should be allowed to continue these already successful processes and procedures. 2. It could create a chilling effect on the speech of students, faculty, and staff alike on campus. Students in my classes want to be able to discuss difficult topics like race, gender, and other complex topics. The language of this bill is both broad and vague enough that it will create uncertainty about what is allowed in the classroom and how controversial topics can be discussed. Not only that, but the presumption that faculty and students need to be restricted in terms of the subjects of the classroom is infantilizing to students, who are perfectly capable of thinking for themselves, and insulting to faculty whose expertise and professionalism are called into question. Although the language of this bill does not explicitly accuse faculty of indoctrinating students, it implies this by mandating classes that "do not require or attempt to require a student to adopt a belief that any race, sex, or ethnicity or social, political, or religious belief is inherently superior to any other..." Faculty in college and university classrooms do not have the goal of requiring a set of beliefs. In my US history courses, I hope that my students will learn information and perspectives that they have not previously encountered in high school classrooms--an appropriate goal because my students are older and college classes should be more challenging than previous classes. However, I do not encourage one particular view or interpretation of history. Rather, I offer students the skills and opportunities to think critically about the past, while showing empathy for perspectives and experiences unlike their own. Every semester, my students express their excitement for learning new and challenging information. They should be allowed to have these experiences like Texans past. It will make them the workers, thinkers, and citizens that Texas needs.

Lisa Hill
self
Austin, TX

I respectfully implore the Texas Legislature to vote NO on this egregious bill. This bill places politics before the educational needs of students, undermining the quality and integrity of general education requirements in Texas public colleges and universities.

This legislation is unnecessary and duplicative. Texas universities already use tried-and-true procedures for reviewing and revising general education curricula. Vetted and approved by this legislature, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board maintains a statewide course catalog with common numbering, course descriptions, and student learning outcomes developed by faculty working groups from across the state.

SB 37 is wildly inefficient. The bill creates not one but two redundant new processes for curriculum review, neither of which includes instructional faculty or subject-matter experts in decisions about what knowledge and skills all Texas graduates need for success in the workforce and civic life. SB 37 creates an ad hoc advisory committee to "review the core curriculum requirements" and cut courses based on politicized guidelines. Made up primarily of political appointees, this body would be tasked with purging courses with little consideration for pedagogy, professional expertise, or the needs of students.

Andrew Martin
Self, Professor
Lubbock, TX

I am speaking for myself as a private citizen. Thank you to the Committee Chair and Members for your service on this committee, and for holding this hearing to encourage and consider public commentary on this bill. A balanced process for debating potential legislation benefits all of us.

SB 37 will affect me directly as a tenured full Professor at Texas Tech University, as a member of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and president of the local AAUP Chapter, and as a former Faculty Senator, Associate Director, Associate Dean, and Interim Dean for TTU. While the intent behind SB 37 is to improve management and effectiveness of our state's institutions of higher education, its effects will be quite the opposite.

Political appointees already have an important role in governing institutions of higher education through their service on boards of regents. Direct control over our students' curricula and hiring or firing our faculty colleagues should fall to the faculty, who know their subjects and their students best. If SB 37 passes in any shape or form, faculty expertise and training will have no value, and students will be denied essential learning opportunities shaped by the leading research and discourse in their fields of study.

Shared governance, a foundational concept of higher education in which I've invested decades of effort, will be destroyed. Faculty will lose their authority over their own research and course content and their broader role in the shared governance of the institution. Some of my best colleagues have already been leaving Texas, especially ones at early career points, primarily due to legislation that threatens their ability to contribute meaningfully to the university.

In thirty years of teaching in Texas, I've served on many curriculum and hiring committees. Updating and developing curricula and hiring fellow instructors and teaching assistants are crucial responsibilities in our quickly evolving academic landscape. It takes time and effort- I'll be teaching a new version of one of my classes this coming fall and will put in at least 120 hours preparing new material before the semester even starts. Last summer I spent 30 hours on a search for a qualified visiting assistant professor in my area. Faculty do this willingly because it's a necessary commitment to leading the discipline and the curriculum. Our dedication to advancing the curriculum and hiring effectively will be completely undermined by SB 37.

There are many flaws in this bill, but the most concerning is the disenfranchisement of the faculty from their research, their teaching, and their students. Nationwide competition to hire the best faculty and attract the best students is already difficult; this will make it impossible. The effects will be completely devastating to the future for our students, faculty and institutions of higher education in Texas. Please vote no on SB 37.

Cindy Fountain
Self/ Retail Merchandiser
Cleburne, TX

I Oppose this bill and urge the committee to vote against it. The authors of this bill seem intent on destroying the public universities in Texas. When the best professors and administrators leave because the university has become a political police state, so will the students. Why will anyone want to come here and pay the out of state tuition. What of grants that may be lost? When the universities see the loss of prestige and financial results of this, the accountability will lie solely with the authors of the bill, the legislators who vote for it, and the legislator bosses, ie the Gov, Lt Gov, and Speaker.

Lorraine Pangle
The University of Texas at Aus
AUSTIN, TX

I'm a professor of government and I direct a program in civic education at UT Austin, the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Study of Core Texts and Ideas. I speak only for myself, not for UT.

I want to thank each of you for your service to our state and your dedication to improving higher education in Texas. As a conservative I share the concern that our universities aren't as politically balanced as they should be, that we don't always teach the principles of liberty as well as we should. SB 37, with its restrictive idea of the core, will make our job harder.

Our country is exceptional, and an exceptional country needs an exceptionally deep education. At the Jefferson Center, we begin from the recognition that liberty is an extraordinarily hard thing to use well, a hard thing to keep. Free societies need free minds, minds that are curious, skeptical, imaginative, and deeply reflective about what a good life is and what a good human being is.

At the Jefferson Center, we believe the best civic education is a liberal education. Students need workplace skills, sure, but they also need to read Shakespeare to reflect on good and bad leaders. They need to study Plato and Augustine and the Bible and Rousseau to think about what the human soul is and what it needs to thrive. These courses won't make them earn more money, but they'll make their souls richer.

SB 37 says that core courses must not "require or attempt to require a student to adopt a belief that any race, sex, or ethnicity or social, political, or religious belief is inherently superior to any other." Do our legislators not want us to argue for the truth of our Founding principles? This law, I fear, isn't intended to be uniformly enforced, but only used as a tool against disfavored social and political beliefs. This isn't a good use of law. If we did purge our core courses of readings from disfavored authors we might train students to parrot officially approved ideas, but we wouldn't educate them to understand ethics, or economics, or the problem of justice, or the challenges we face in trying to forge a better nation.

To become wise, Americans students need to read Adam Smith on economic liberty, but also Marx; James Madison on religious liberty but also Thomas Aquinas; MLK on the merits of a colorblind society but also Malcolm X. As the great proponent of liberty, John Stuart Mill said, he who knows only his own side of an argument knows little of that and is ill-equipped to defend it.

A thriving university is a delicate ecosystem. It needs a great deal of freedom, boldness, trust, and intellectual virtue to work well. This effort to micromanage education with the blunt instrument of the law will damage it. Instead of SB 37, you might require our president to report each year on what he's doing to advance intellectual diversity, deep, serious questioning, civil discourse, and students' understanding of liberty. That would be a good challenge, and we'd be better for the effort to meet it.

Suellen Myers
self
THE WOODLANDS, TX

To members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

I urge you to vote NO on SB13. I see it as an infringement on academic freedom and rooted in a fear. I can't help but think of how Galileo was once surpressed because he dared ponder something beyond the scope of those in power. And how did that turn out? As I understand it, this bill would establish a hand picked governing body appointed by the governor and lieutenant governor to ensure their point of view - and ONLY their point of view - is unchallenged and promoted. Higher education should be a safe place to question assumptions and and engage in rigorous thinking. Lets not be afraid of that. Pease vote No on SB37
Thank you,
Suellen Myers
The Woodlands, tx

Megan Raby, Dr.
self, university professor
Austin, TX

My name is Dr. Megan Raby. I am submitting testimony against SB37 as a private citizen. I'm also a history professor at a public university in Texas, and I teach courses in the Core Curriculum. I'd like to clear up some serious misconceptions about what actually happens in university classrooms.

SB37 is based on two flawed assumptions: (1) That college students can't think for themselves, and (2) that professors have wildly unchecked power to indoctrinate students—or that we would even want to do that.

On the contrary, my goal—and that of every colleague I know!—is to empower our students, whatever their personal beliefs or backgrounds, with the tools to find and evaluate reliable information, to think critically, assess differing views, use evidence to support their own arguments, and to express themselves precisely and persuasively. Professors are simply not in the business of coercing students to adopt particular beliefs, period.

SB37 is a "solution" in search of a problem. Core courses like mine are already subject to rigorous assessment to ensure they meet learning outcomes set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board—efforts that would be duplicated or undermined by SB37's governing boards. In addition, all our teaching is already accountable to student course evaluations, peer observations, annual faculty reviews, and even more extensive post-tenure reviews.

SB37 claims to prevent indoctrination, but its result would be just the opposite. Placing curricular decisions under the direct control of politicians invites politically-motivated censorship, and will limit students' choice and freedom to access to the degrees, certificates, classes, and challenging content they demand from us. Have some faith in Texas students and their professors: vote no on SB37.

Jordan Pacelli Everett
Prevention Institute
Houston, TX

My name is Jordan Pacelli Everett (jordan@preventioninstitute.org) I'm a licensed social worker in the state of Texas, and live in Houston. I work for Prevention Institute, a national public health organization. We coordinate the Houston-region based Communities of Care initiative which brings together community members to address a wide range of needs related to mental health and wellbeing for youth including improving the education system to support better mental health outcomes for the young people in our communities.
I am writing to oppose SB 37, which threatens the mental health of college and university students across our state. Restrictive laws passed last session that closed down long-beloved safe spaces and on-campus resources have already had a harmful impact and SB 37 would make things even worse.
As laws are passed that try to control and restrict critical thinking and intellectual curiosity about other ways of being (something congruous with higher education), there will become a further disconnect between what is taught in educational institutions and the reality of living in our diverse Texas communities and workplaces.
Further, this bill, if passed, will drive strong contributors to our education systems and future leaders of our economy out of the state. Texas public universities boast some of the best professors across the country. SB 37 would drastically hinder professors' ability to provide a thoughtful, knowledgeable learning environment, and limit the top tier research that can be produced at our public colleges and universities. What even is an institute of higher learning without free thinking? Students want to, and in our democracy have the right to, read, think, and discuss a wide variety of topics at their Texas public universities.

LAURA SMITH
self retired teacher
THE WOODLANDS, TX

Please vote NO on SB 37. What are you thinking!

Please vote NO on SB 37! What are you thinking! Do you not remember WW II and Nazi Germany and how they started...control and censorship of universities. We do not need to go down that path.

Scottie Buehler, Dr.
self; professor
Kyle, TX

I write in strong opposition to SB 37 as teacher, researcher, and Texan. It represents undue big-government intrusion into public education that significantly undermines the free speech of instructors and students and will ultimately impact Texas' ability to remain nationally competitive.
I am a professor of history at a state university in Texas. As experts in our fields and in teaching, faculty are the best positioned to develop the content for their courses. We use feedback from students, administrators and other faculty to update our curriculum regularly to keep up with advances in teaching and research. This law would constrain our ability to continue to teach the most up to date information using the most up to date methods.
SB 37 also enacts curricular censorship. It centralizes coursework decisions in committees whose members are political appointees. This undermines the free speech of faculty and students, who should be able to choose what they study through the selection of courses and course evaluations.
This legislation is unnecessary and duplicative. Texas universities already use tried-and-true procedures for reviewing and revising general education curricula. Vetted and approved by this legislature, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board maintains a statewide course catalog with common numbering, course descriptions, and student learning outcomes developed by faculty working groups from across the state.
SB 37 is wildly inefficient. The bill creates not one but two redundant new processes for curriculum review, neither of which includes instructional faculty or subject-matter experts in decisions about what knowledge and skills all Texas graduates need for success in the workforce and civic life.
SB 37 injects politics into decisions about general education curriculum and gives the strong impression that Texas no longer cares to have world-class public universities. It prioritizes political control and ideological surveillance over educational quality, the employability of graduates, and individual liberty. Its passage would put the state's economy at a competitive disadvantage, abruptly devaluing every public dollar invested in the state's higher education institutions.
Public universities serve the needs of the communities you represent, your state, and future generations of Texans. They bring in expertise and money and train the future workforce to ensure Texas remains competitive nationally. Will we be better served if whichever party happens to control the legislature can decide what history we teach and who is qualified to teach it? I think not.

Dede Fox
Dede Fox retired educator/autho
The Woodlands, TX

Against SB 37. Adults choose to attend a particular college. The government of a democracy has no business reviewing university curriculum, degrees, certificate programs, faculty councils, etc. It's censorship and impinges on personal freedoms to study and speak up on all topics. As Brian Evans says, "This bill infringes on the academic freedom to learn for the student and the freedom to teach and freedom to research for the professor."

Courtney Carter
Self/Professor
Rowlett, TX

I strongly encourage you to oppose SB 37. As a faculty member of one of Texas' largest state universities, I can confidently say SB 37 will be detrimental to the future of higher education in this state. This bill is a serious threat to academic freedom. Curriculum at the college/university level should never be influenced by politics and unfortunately, politics are the driving force behind SB 37. If passed, SB 37 will eliminate the development and refinement of critical thinking skills in students. This will in turn negatively impact future economic, academic, and social growth in Texas. This bill will play a considerable role in diminishing prospective students' desire to pursue higher education in our great state. SB 37 places undue burden on faculty and will ultimately result in a mass exodus of some exceptional Texas professors relocating to states where academic freedom is respected and revered. SB 37 has no place in Texas universities and colleges and I strongly encourage you to oppose SB 37.

Katie Spence
Myself
Austin, TX

Please vote no on SB 37. This bill is overly prescriptive and elevates politics over academic standards. We have some of the finest institutes of higher education in Texas. Don't make it the business of politicians to decide what gets taught in these institutions, it would harm the ability of our professors to teach. Texans working at these schools have spent decades building them up and have been very successful at creating incredible research and academia. Don't put their stellar reputations at risk. Please don't let SB 37 leave committee. Thank you.

Martha Reyna
Jolt Action
Elemendorf, TX

This bill limits accessibility to quality public education at state universities, when it’s already hard enough for marginalized communities to get into college and graduate with a degree. It forces a very specific and conservative narrative in classrooms and in institutions within universities and censors students and professors from speaking out on important topics that affect our communities today. This bill would also hurt universities’ standings in Texas, creating a less competitive field nationwide, ultimately hurting our financial investment in education.

Aruni Nanayakkara
self
Spring, TX

I got my Phd and my husband his MBA, as well as our Bachelor's degrees from public universities in Texas. We value the quality of education that we received. As our children seek higher education, one of the critical criteria on which we will evaluate where we will pay for a quality education will be if the institution can practice academic freedom on what is taught and what can be learned. We strongly oppose SB 37.

Mary Morisette
self/nurse
Conroe, TX

Just as an atheist may not want to learn about Christianity so is true for CRT yet Christianity continues to be taught with all its brutality & sin. CRT only raises awareness & helps us comprehend the wrongs done to races. Like Christianity it also shows how good can help eliminate the cruelty. It is fear that wanted Jesus to die on the cross & fear that want CRT to die in our schools.

Misha Lesley
Self - Alumnus of The University of Texas at Austin, Director of Ministry Operations - Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Houston, TX

I am asking for a "no" vote on this bill because Talking Points:
SB 37 threatens UT Austin's reputation by putting politics above academic standards.
Top professors will leave, reducing the quality of education and research.
The bill put's UT's achievement as a leader in Tier 1 research universities is at risk.
The value of degrees will go down if academic freedom is restricted.

Valerie Martinez Ebers
Self professor
Northlake, TX

I am writing to ask you to vote against SB 37. In my occupation as a professor of political science for 35 years I have always emphasized teaching my students to understand, care, respect and nurture our form of democracy in the United States. To be effective citizens they need to be knowledgeable but also think independently so they can decide for themselves what they feel is the appropriate actions of our government and its elected officials. To do this they need to hear all sides of an argument, even the sides I may not personally agree with. I pride myself on never revealing my biases on topics we discuss. SB 37 will limit the topics of political contention that I can talk about (restrict my freedom of speech) and it will limit my students' substantive knowledge and exercise of independent thinking. Frankly, it will reduce the value of the education they receive at Texas institutions of higher education and they may rightfully decide to pursue college education in some other state. This will hurt Texas economically in a variety of ways.

Stephanie Smith
Self
Ingleside, TX

We strongly oppose Senate Bill 37, as it represents a dangerous overreach into the autonomy of public institutions of higher education and threatens the core values of academic freedom, institutional independence, and the free exchange of ideas.

This bill proposes extensive government intervention in the governance of universities, including state-mandated reviews of curriculum and degree programs. Such a move undermines the authority of faculty and academic leaders, who are best positioned to make decisions regarding the content and direction of academic programs based on expertise and pedagogical principles—not political influence or external interference. Academic institutions must retain the ability to shape curricula without being subject to politically motivated oversight that prioritizes ideology over education quality and intellectual diversity.

Additionally, the creation of a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Office of the Ombudsman, which would have the power to review the practices of faculty councils or senates, further erodes the foundation of shared governance that has long been essential to higher education. Faculty and students should have a say in the policies and procedures that affect their learning environment, without the constant threat of state-controlled censorship or micromanagement.

The mandatory training for governing board members, while potentially beneficial, is a thinly veiled attempt to exert state influence over the fundamental decision-making processes of institutions. Instead of imposing top-down directives, Texas should empower colleges and universities to pursue their mission of academic excellence, innovation, and diversity of thought.

We are also deeply concerned about the civil penalties attached to non-compliance, which could have chilling effects on academic freedom and institutional governance. Such penalties create an atmosphere of fear, undermining the collaborative spirit that should drive higher education forward.

Higher education should not be used as a political tool to enforce a narrow vision of what students should learn or how faculty should teach. We urge lawmakers to reject SB 37 and respect the fundamental autonomy of Texas's public universities.

Michael Belsick
Fredericksburg Tea Party
Fredericksburg, TX

FOR SB 37

Mag Franzoni
Self
Spring, TX

I urge you to vote NO one this horrible bill

Betsy Friauf
Self, communications specialist
Plano, TX

Please do not pass this bill, as it will kill academic freedom, cause a brain drain that cripples innovation and is bad for Texas business as well as the future of our most brilliant young people.

Sylvia Campbell
self
The Woodlands, TX

Dear Committee Members,
By enacting SB 37, Texas will essentially be ceding academic excellence to other states. Stifling academic freedom is no way to support our fine universities. Strong arming and censoring diverse thinking limits the freedom to learn for the students and the freedom to teach and freedom to research for the professors. I urge you to support higher education in Texas and vote NO on SB 37.
Respectfully,
Sylvia Campbell

Angela Lehman
Self
The Colony, TX

This is a shortsighted and foolish bill that will lead to faculty brain drain in the state, as well as an attack on the humanities. Many professionals such as lawyers, teachers, and social workers use humanities majors as a stepping stone to graduate school, and this bill will ensure that no one ever pursues those career paths again in this state.

Heidi Bray
self
austin, TX

I oppose this bill---how dare you insate a civil Penalty

Rosemarie Quick
Self, teacher and parent
ROUND ROCK, TX

I am a Texas parent who received their Master's degree in a liberal arts field at UT Austin back in 2001, when my professors had the freedom to teach in their specialty how they saw fit. They still had their first amendment rights that extended to their classrooms. It was glorious. This bill by Creighton is the complete opposite of glorious, it is disgusting and agenda driven. I have many many friends in public university academia and we are all afraid it could lead to a faculty brain drain, self-censorship or lawsuits against the state. Some of these friends of mine have offers at the ready to leave their public university jobs and go to other research institutions far away from this authoritarian state of ours. The brain drain will be more real than you imagine.

This is the death of higher ed.

All of this saddens me more because I have one child in a TX community college and another who hopes to be applying to TX public universities within the next few years. So my family is completely invested in this bill not passing.

Shame on Sen. Creighton, for not giving colleagues enough time to review a 13-page amendment he filed shortly before the Tuesday vote was taken. Creighton gave them 10 minutes to read it. The amendment added that universities would be required to either end or revise degree programs if the state determines the programs do not offer a return on investment for students.

What on Earth is going on over there at the lege? Do y'all just sit around and think of how far you can overreach and turn TX into a full on authoritarian state? I, for one, am not impressed.

Vote no on SB37.

Patrick Larkin, Dr.
self/associate professor (biochemistry)
Corpus Christi, TX

Hello, I’m Dr. Patrick Larkin and I am a science faculty member at a regional public university in Texas. However, I am speaking for myself and not on behalf of my institution. I am asking the House Committee on Higher Education to vote No on SB 37. I believe it will be very bad for Texas institutions of higher education, the students they serve, and the state as a whole.

My primary reasons are three-fold. First, taking curriculum decisions out of the hands of faculty will be very bad for students. As a teacher I strive each day not only to impart a body of knowledge to my students, but to encourage them to develop skills in reasoning, communication, examining evidence, and considering problems from multiple angles. I am concerned that passage of this bill will make certain issues “off limits”, denying them the opportunity to engage with topics that, whether we like it or not, will affect them and their peers now and in the future.

Secondly, SB 37’s intent to diminish the functioning and influence of faculty senates will damage higher education in Texas. I have served as both a senator and as speaker of my university’s faculty senate. Most of the issues we deal with are related to curriculum, university policies, or faculty concerns related to working conditions, not political or social issues. For example, we examine proposals for new degrees, minors, or certificates. Some of these sounded appealing but were very poorly prepared. They would have done a disservice to students if perfunctorily approved by an administrator or council lacking experience in the field.

Thirdly, it has the potential to harm innovation and creativity in Texas. A few years ago we had a very talented materials scientist interview for a faculty position at our institution. The candidate was also female, and could have been a good role model for our female STEM majors, who don’t often see women in such roles. However, at the end of the interview she thanked us for our interest and time but said she just could not accept a position in Texas. She felt the political environment here was not welcoming to academics, female ones in particular. I believe passage of this bill would only reinforce such perceptions, making hiring of academic talent harder.

In closing, I think no good can come of SB 37. I urge you to vote No on this bill. Thank you.

Antonella Longo
self, researcher
Highland Village, TX

Honorable Committee Members,
I am writing you as a private citizen and voter in Texas to express my concerns regarding SB 37. Note that I am not speaking on behalf of my university.

As an employee at a Texas state university, I value academic freedom as it is central to critical thinking and essential for productive outcomes in our higher education campuses. Faculty at public universities are already required to report annually on the productivity of their research and/or the quality of their teaching. Our work is evaluated by peers who are prepared to do that with the needed competency. Curricula are reviewed and courses are changed and adapted to match the needs of the students. Universities already know how to do that effectively. You should trust the experts who were hired in a competitive environment if you don't want faculty and researchers to leave Texas for the lack of academic freedom.

I respectfully ask you to vote against SB 37 and reject big, wasteful government interference for Texas community colleges, universities, and health institutions. Note that big government outreach is not a conservative value and goes against the wishes of citizens from both sides of the political spectrum.

Karen Santhanam
Self
Cedar Park, TX

I oppose SB 37. This is just wrong! College is a chance to explore ideas. It's wrong to try to control the curriculum by the state. Let educational institutions do it. This is a fascist bill that should clearly be stuck down. Academic freedom as well as free speech and the right to free expression are hallmarks of our democracy. Do not try to limit them ban educated workforce is the best workforce for Texas. Vote NO on SB 37!

Ira Dworkin, Dr.
self (teacher)
Bryan, TX

I am testifying on my own behalf as an individual and a private citizen to express my opposition to SB 37.

As a faculty member at Texas A&M University, I, and my colleagues throughout the state, have been effectively educating Texans for generations, including many members of the Texas state legislature and the many alumni of public universities who are employed in your offices.

Faculty at public universities are already subject to rigorous evaluation, have minimal governance power, and work under administrators who have demonstrated themselves to be overwhelmingly accommodating of the desires of the legislature. Indeed, at Texas A&M last year, the university faculty and administration were reminded of their own limited power when the Board of Regents unilaterally eliminated academic programs in direct opposition to the scholarly expertise of faculty in those fields.

Therefore, SB 37 is at its best redundant and at its worst deliberately demoralizing and punitive to the thousands of committed educators who have contributed so much to the education of so many of the people in the Texas state legislature.

SB 37 creates an additional layer of big government bureaucracy that undermines the scholarly expertise of public employees in the state of Texas, which is a direct threat to the practice of academic freedom. The bloated bureaucracy that SB 37 proposes will require significant expenses to do work that faculty already do with a great deal of oversight and works against the goals of both government efficiency and academic freedom.

Elaine Branagh
Self/retired
Austin, TX

Oppose! Universities are meant to be diverse places of learning. Accreditation requirements already exist. Stop creating additional wasteful government spending on a problem that does not exist!

Heather Kanenberg
Self - College Professor
Houston, TX

4/4/2025 - House Higher Education Committee

I write today as a private citizen who represents no organization or group, but who has worked in higher education for 18 years in the state of Texas.

I strongly oppose SB37. Texas has much to be proud of with more top research universities and health institutions than any other state; this is the case because of faculty freedom to teach, question, and discover. I fear what SB37 will do to the quality and depth of education available to those seeking higher education in our state. SB37 would impose unnecessary oversight on curriculum decisions, limit faculty governance, and create bureaucratic hurdles that will hinder academic innovation. By requiring political appointees and external stakeholders, rather than highly qualified faculty, to make decisions regarding course content, available degrees, and faculty hiring, SB 37 weakens the academic quality and national standing of our universities.

As a former faculty senate president and an active member of the higher education community, I can say that my years in leadership in higher education on the faculty senate and shared governance were filled with positive collaboration with our administration. This bill is framed from a deficit perspective that deep oversight is needed of faculty. This just plainly is not the case. Faculty are following the laws and policies of the state and our institutions and working collaboratively with our administrators to ensure students get the very best education in each discipline or profession they study. Faculty are not adversaries or enemies, as this bill implies; we are dedicated to providing a high-quality education and supporting student development.

The best universities in the country thrive on ensuring freedom to teach, to learn, and to research, and this legislation would put Texas at a disadvantage in attracting top faculty, students, and researchers. Higher education should be the place where students, faculty, and staff are empowered to engage in rigorous academic inquiry, develop critical thinking skills, and prepare for leadership in careers that happen in a complex and diverse community. I fear deeply that this legislation and its impact will help to push students out of state. We cannot afford to undermine the future of the Texas workforce in this way.

Ultimately, your committee has significant work to do for Texas. There are many priorities for the state to tackle right now including opportunities to improve upon the good work happening in higher education. SB37 does not address the most pressing challenges or concerns. Instead, it really seems to the average Texan, like ‘big government’ coming into our communities to regulate the opportunities and possibilities available to our children and students.

Thank you, Heather Kanenberg, Houston, TX 77044

Debopreeta Bhattacharya
Self: Student at UT Dallas
Richardson, TX

Good morning to the members of the Texas Legislature. My name is Debopreeta Bhattacharya and I am a graduating senior at UT Dallas. I was also the Vice President of Student Government up until the end of my term on May 1st and have served as a senator and chair of the Student Affairs Committee before that. Through these positions, I have seen the importance of shared governance with the bodies of the Academic Senate and Staff Council. They have been instrumental in ensuring that students and staff are well informed about current happenings in the university and that they are getting the necessary resources to be successful. This bill will effectively strip down the impacts of these bodies which will have lasting negative consequences on faculty and staff especially. This bill also aims to control the education of students at public universities in the state. The point of higher education is for students to be exposed to the realities of the world and gain different perspectives. If this bill is implemented, it will lead to the erasure of this which will render higher education ineffective. As a sociology major and healthcare management minor, I have gained a wide variety of knowledge that will help me in many aspects of my personal and professional life. Being a student leader has taught me the importance of standing up for the integrity of the university and the livelihood of students, faculty, and staff, which is why I am urging all of you to vote against this bill and protect our institutions of higher education. Thank you.

Isla Schuchs Carr, Dr.
self, college professor
Corpus Christi, TX

My name is Isla Schuchs Carr, and I am writing as a private citizen, a higher education professional, and the parent of one Texas university student and two Texas high school students. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 37, which threatens faculty governance, academic freedom, and the ability of Texas institutions to provide students with a high-quality education. I am also concerned with the potential economic impact this will have on our state, as well as undermining our Texas universities' abilities to retain their competitive advantage against other universities around the country and the world.
I have served as a faculty senator and a faculty senate speaker, and we already operate in an advisory capacity. I believe that our university administration finds our contribution to the campus community beneficial for our continued success. Faculty are often the first to see and hear concerns of our students and can also provide important feedback on changes to university practices. As a faculty senator, I have served as an advocate for situations negatively impacting our students, as well as mediated issues that involved staff members, such as assisting in identifying issues with our campus bookstore adoption system and distance learning platform.
While serving as the faculty senate speaker, I have served on the hiring committees for my university's provost and two deans. These hiring committees included a mixture of other faculty members, staff members, and upper administrators. We also include students and alumni in these position searches. I did not have a final say in any of these hiring practices, even of my own department chair or colleagues, but I feel our current processes are beneficial in selecting leaders who work well across the various departments that they supervise.
Core curriculum provides students with a well-rounded education and imparts skills such as critical thinking, analysis. It strengthens their written and oral communication skills, and exposes them to ideas and experiences they might not otherwise seek out. I strongly believe that the skills learned through core curriculum will make my children, and others, better scientists, engineers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, etc. The creativity that leads to innovation does not occur in a closed system, and decades of scientific discoveries have been inspired by curiosity of the world around us and the problems that face humanity.
In short, I feel that SB 37 is an overreaction to imaginary problems and will do more damage than good. I have little faith that creating additional layers of oversight and bureaucracy will do anything but cost more money and slow down innovation. I take pride in the education I assist my colleagues in providing my own students, the education my own children receive here, the strength of our Texas economy, and the leadership of our state in innovative research. For all of these reasons, I ask you to vote against SB 37.

Orlando Lara
Self
Spring, TX

My name is Orlando Lara and I am a doctoral candidate, an academic job seeker, and a parent in Klein ISD. I am an organizer with the Ethnic Studies Network of Texas, so I am keenly aware how censorship legislation has impacted K-12, and in particular my fields of study social studies or social sciences and Ethnic Studies, which deal centrally with the issues that this bill is trying micro-manage, control, and regulate.

I am currently speaking for myself.

I strongly oppose this bill because it is a job, workforce, and profession-killing bill, and I hope that you will vigorously oppose it.

As doctoral candidate, I have been personally impacted already by SB 17 and SB 18. This year, I already noticed that there was only 1 job available in Latino/a Studies and this position was cut due to federal anti-DEI cuts. If this bill passes, those programs could be downsized and even cut. Such decisions should be handled by deans and faculty, not by state-level bureaucrats and whatever censorship and vetting infrastructure is set up by this bill.

This is textbook government overreach and I know for a fact that it would be vigorously opposed by the Governor and every conservative state politician if the concepts under regulation were deemed to be "conservative-leaning" values, or religiously-based values.

This bill will be extraordinarily costly. Who will be hired to conduct the vetting and assessments? How much will it cost to set up this infrastructure?

We have already seen how SB3 and HB 1605 in K-12 severely under-estimated how much staff time would be needed to execute the book and course censorship and evaluation that those bills mandated.

This bill will by necessity grow government and increase the cost of higher-ed, diverting much-needed funds away from making college more affordable to creating a new censorship bureaucracy that will ultimately reduce academic jobs and drive talented faculty away.

I hope conservative lawmakers will ask themselves. If Democrats were to propose a bill to add ideological and class diversity to the boards of trustees of all public Texas colleges, would you support that legislation? A very credible argument can be made about the lack of ideological and class diversity in those spaces.

If this bill passes, then it will be very difficult to argue against similar actions taken by Democrats in future years if and when they gain power. Let's be honest. Republicans have been working night and day to prevent Democrats from ever taking control of any branch of Texas government (and this bill and bills like it are likely part of the ideological and cultural strand of that strategy), but this will not and cannot last forever.

Let's act wisely now and keep governmental over-reach out of higher education. Let's protect academic freedom and campus control of curriculum and program matters.

Lynne Ferguson
Myself; book editor
Austin, TX

Academic freedom is the backbone of higher education in this country. This bill would break it at UT. It would make students less sophisticated and less able to think for themselves. It would tie the hands of faculty and make them fearful, as well as less effective teachers and researchers. Importantly, it would wreak havoc on the university’s reputation and have devastating consequences for recruitment and retention. I guarantee you that, if this bill passes, what happens at UT will no longer “change the world.” Instead, it will drive both faculty and students to other institutions and sink UT as a university.

Ariel Kelley, Dr.
self
Corpus Christi, TX

House Education Committee:

I am a professor at a public university in Texas, but I am writing as a private citizen to oppose SB37, which threatens the quality and competitiveness of our universities and colleges while also creating unnecessary bureaucratic waste.

SB16 and SB17 have already hurt my university's ability to attract and retain gifted scholars and students. Several faculty members have left, while excellent job candidates opted to go elsewhere, because they feared cand the lose of the research funding necessary for innovation. SB37 will only exacerbate the program by placing curriculum decisions in the hands of politicians and appointees rather than the experts in the field: the faculty. By removing faculty from curriculum design and university governance, you remove the building blocks of successful schools. The bureaucracy necessary to police the proposed procedures also places a drain on university coffers, limiting schools' ability to develop and expand faculty research and students' learning. Few faculty would willing subject themselves to this, and SB37 would cause a flood of talent from the state, which in turn pushes students to seek degrees elsewhere.

SB37 will also directly harm our workforce and intensify the teacher shortage. One of my primary roles is to prepare future educators, and I have seen a steep decline in people wanting to enter the classroom. This started with SB16, but SB37 would worsen this by preventing a professor like myself from adequately prepping students for the TEXES exams. The TEXES exams for social students and history are some of the hardest TEXES exams in the state, because they require critical thinking, knowledge of opposing ideologies, and information on complex historical, political, and economic events. Silencing and policing faculty means that those students will not be exposed to key ideas, including those included TEKS requirements, so they are much more likely to fail their exams and seek another profession.

In summation, SB37 will undermine our state's ability to draw and hold on to the top scholars, which weakens our academic standards and competitiveness with other schools in the nation. It will also impact the workforce by keeping more teachers out of the classroom, and the oversite proposed with do nothing but waste valuable university resources.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ariel Kelley
6350 Meadowvista Apt 1114
Corpus Christi, TX 78414
State Representative: Todd Hunter; Senator: Abel Hinojosa.

Kelly Bezio, Dr.
Self
Corpus Christi, TX

Dr. Kelly Bezio
418 Troy Drive
Corpus Christi, TX 78412
Representative Todd Hunter

My name is Kelly Bezio, and I am providing this testimony as a private individual and member of the American Association of University Professors. I currently work as a faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts at a regional public university. I am writing today in opposition to SB 37.

At a recent careers panel hosted by my department featuring alumni from our program, a former student came up to chat. Charlie did not know if I would remember him or not because he had taken a large lecture format core course with me some years ago. But he wanted to make sure I knew that, although he was not a major in our program, he had taken several courses with us. He wanted to tell me that he knew what he learned about best storytelling practices and how to write well were essential to his goals to start his own business and promote himself in the coming years. He is an example of many students I meet teaching in our core curriculum: they come to our classes to many professional goals and trajectories in mind, and they want the skills we have to offer.

SB 37 is bad for higher education because it impedes student choice. We work tirelessly as faculty to ensure that courses, degree programs, certificates, and programs (such as careers panels) will meet the needs of the workforce we can anticipate—and those our innovative, entrepreneurial students will bring into existence as they drive the future of the Texas economy. Restricting decisions about the core curriculum to a handful of appointees will deeply impair the ability of institutions of higher education to create the intellectual environment students need to succeed professionally. Students will choose to get their education elsewhere. Our students know that the right certificate or the right minor will increase their hire-ability and adaptability in an ever-evolving job market. They are savvy about the way jobs and careers are constantly changing, and they look for an education that will sustain them for years after they obtain their degree. We need to be able to provide a broad menu of possibilities in order to make a Texas education a sought-after asset by employers.

When I read the current version of SB 37, I see Texas losing talent through micromanagement—and losing money paying salaries and other expenses to duplicate what universities and colleges already do to maintain rigorous and relevant degree programs. Texas needs you to vote NO on SB37.

Simon Fass, Dr.
"self" professor
Plano, TX

Texas' Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are global leaders today. Our 22 ranked HEIs are in the top 2.5% of the world's 25,000 universities. We have achieved this in the same way that free-market capitalism has powered the extraordinary success of other sectors of the Texas economy: freedom to compete intensively for faculty, students, research funds and capital investment in a dynamic global market. This autonomy continues to give our HEIs unparalleled capacity to discover, assess, develop and promote new products and ideas, letting the markets for them judge which of these are useful and productive, and which are not.

The value of our freedoms to think, speak and act is clear when comparing ourselves to places where autonomy is restricted. The average rank of Texas' HEIs is 650 out of 25,000, notably higher than 806 for all other ranked US universities. In communist China it is 1020, and in Russia 1250.

Passage of SB37 will handcuff the ability of our HEIs to continue to compete with others. Texas, a state that values and advances free-market competition, free-enterprise initiative and limited government intrusion should not now decide to emasculate its HEIs by adopting the higher education policies of our global competitors.

We must safeguard not endanger the blessings we have. We should hold tightly to the sentiment that the US Supreme Court expressed almost 70 years ago in Sweezy v. New Hampshire, 354 U.S. 234 (1957):

"The essentiality of freedom in the community of American universities is almost self-evident. No one should underestimate the vital role in a democracy that is played by those who guide and train our youth. To impose any straitjacket upon the intellectual leaders in our colleges and universities would imperil the future of our nation. No field of education is so thoroughly comprehended by man that new discoveries cannot yet be made… Scholarship cannot flourish in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding; otherwise, our civilization will stagnate and die."

Timothy Johnson, PhD
Self/Assistant Professor of History
Corpus Christi, TX

I am a current assistant professor of history and a faculty senator. However, I am not writing on behalf of any group or institution. I am writing in my capacity as an informed citizen and voter.

Though I disagree with all portions of SB 37, in this statement I would like to focus on the negative effects it would have on free exchange and debate. As currently designed, SB37 would police and restrict the sorts of conversations that make Texas college and university classrooms productive spaces for growth and learning.

For Texas students to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow, they need an educational environment that is open to a range of views and perspectives. Sometimes, this means students will have difficult conversations or read difficult materials that challenge their views. Such conversations might make students feel uncomfortable. As difficult or uncomfortable as these classroom interactions might be, they are fundamental to student learning and growth. Shielding students from perspectives and views that differ from their own, or that differ from those of their elected leaders, will only leave students less prepared to engage with the world after they graduate. Our world is diverse. Our state of Texas is diverse. We serve no one by failing to prepare students to engage productively with the world they live in.

The students in my classroom are either curious young adults or people who have returned to the classroom after years of experience raising families and working in careers. No matter whether they are young or old, these students want the full range of academic debate and expertise available to get the most out of their education. Any instance where a professor will have to censor their speech in the classroom is going to prevent those students from receiving the education they want. If students see Texas professors being constrained from providing the full range of their expertise, students will be incentivized to look outside of Texas for their education. Professors will also be incentivized to look outside of Texas for classroom environments that allow them to be the best educators and mentors they can be.

The provisions in SB 37 policing the content of curriculum and classes would require new levels of state oversight. It should go without saying that this would require increased bureaucracy funded by taxpayer dollars. We should all ask ourselves why we would want increased costly bureaucracy to make college and university instruction in Texas less effective and less competitive.

Manuel Piña
Self; faculty member at Texas public institution of higher education
Corpus Christi, TX

My name is Dr. Manuel Piña. I am a public university faculty member, but I am writing today as a concerned, private Texan citizen. I am not testifying on behalf of any institution or organization. I write today to express strong opposition to Senate Bill 37.

SB 37, if passed, will introduce a significant amount of unnecessary and wasteful bureaucracy. This will burden our public universities without delivering any meaningful improvements. The bill represents an alarming expansion of government interference in areas that are already subject to a series of rigorous checks and evaluation by entities, including, but not limited to, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

In addition to expanding government bureaucracy, this bill sidelines those with direct knowledge and expertise by weakening faculty governance and imposing top-down censure about how academic decisions are made. The creation of politically appointed curriculum review committees, including individuals without academic training, adds inefficiency to a system that already functions through rigorous internal checks and standards.

SB 37 poses a significant threat to the quality of education our students receive. This bill undermines the diversity of perspectives essential for building critical thinking and civic awareness by allowing those without academic credentials to dictate what can or cannot be taught based on political considerations. This will limit students' exposure to challenging, real-world topics in the classroom, hindering their preparation for life beyond the classroom.

This bill represents the epitome of inefficient bureaucratic red tape. SB 37 increases the size and scope of government while undercutting the independence that makes Texas public universities competitive and credible. If passed, this bill could lead to a decline in not only the quality of education Texas students receive but also the caliber of instructional talent that Texas public universities are able to attract.

I urge you to consider the deleterious impact of this bill on students and Texas public institutions and reject this overreaching, inefficient legislation. Vote no on SB 37.

Jara Carrington, Dr.
Self, professor
Dallas, TX

I am submitting written testimony to this committee as a private citizen, but I am also a faculty member at a state university in Texas. I am writing today to specifically ask you to vote against SB 37. This legislation not only attempts to regulate what adults can learn in college, but also seeks to dramatically undermine academic freedom and freedom of speech. The regulation of college curricula and course content should be very concerning to us all. For the most part, faculty at our universities are well respected scholars in their fields, and what we teach is based on well researched and documented knowledge within our disciplines. This bill will ultimately prohibit teaching established knowledge in a variety of fields, in addition to infringing on academic freedom and freedom of speech. Our students deserve better.

In addition, SB 37 seeks to undermine models of shared governance/faculty participation in governance, which have become standards for practice and are necessary for the successful functioning of a university. Bringing in an oversight committee made of politicians will make our universities more ideological, not less, and will negatively impact our universities in multiple ways. Let's be real-- if the threat this bill assumes really does exist (i.e. that we are teaching college students liberal ideology), Texas would not be a mostly red state. This bill imagines a threat and seeks to spend tax payer dollars on this false premise.

We have already seen significant negative impact from SB 17 at our universities in Texas, and I believe that if other bills pass that remove control of curriculum from faculty and reduce shared governance, it will dramatically reduce the quality of education that Texas students receive. Our university is already seeing qualified faculty leave for other schools in other states, and legislation like SB 37 will only increase these numbers. Please help us defend educational freedom in Texas.

Kali Aman-Carrier
Self - Student at the University of Texas at Austin
Cedar Park, TX

By rating educational programs on their economic value and giving the state the power to eliminate these programs, you will be devaluing higher education greatly. To reduce the value of our degrees to economic value is a devaluing of human life. You will have students prioritizing a pursuit of profit over truth and beauty. Denying a career where the greater good of humanity is at the forefront for a career where profit is. I urge you to vote down SB 37. Thank you for consideration and your service.

Najha Black
UTHealth Student
Katy, TX

I oppose SB 37 because it undermines the autonomy and academic freedom of public institutions of higher education in Texas. By allowing excessive external oversight of curriculum and faculty governance, this bill threatens the ability of faculty—those with the most expertise—to shape quality, evidence-based education. Establishing an ombudsman office and authorizing civil penalties may create a chilling effect on open discourse and critical inquiry, both of which are essential to a thriving academic environment. Texas's universities should be empowered to innovate and educate without undue political interference. This bill sets a dangerous precedent and weakens the foundation of higher education in our state.

Audrey Webb
Self
Lockney, TX

OPPOSE!! This bill aims to eliminate DEI and remove critical programs. Texas is already behind the country and world in academic performance, this will set us back decades.

Craig Campbell
Retired self
Austin, TX

This may be the worst bill of the session. Higher education in the U.S. has been the greatest contributor to American Society for the last 100 years. This will lead to the decline of America in the world. Hitler, Putin, and Xia would be proud of this approach to destroying freedom.

Shelby Bridges
Self
Abilene, TX

Please do not pass this bill. I want our K-12 students to have the opportunity to attend a great college in Texas. Having government controlled higher education, threatens the quality of curriculum. It also reduces the diversity of schools, if schools are all required to hire personnel and teach curriculum in a certain way.
I am a public school teacher, and there is already way to much red tape in K-12. I do not believe in this bill and I do not think that it should pass.

Abigail Russell
Self, Student
Houston, TX

This bill will lower the quality of the degrees obtained at Texas universities and harm humanities programs that are already struggling. Any form of standardization at a university level will hinder pedagogy as well as research.

Ollie Valdez-Ortiz
Jolt Action
San Antonio, TX

This bill aims to censor what students can learn in college and what professors can teach by prohibiting curriculum that addresses topics that affect marginalized communities. This level of control over public universities severely undermines their autonomy and could ultimately hurt graduation rates or even deter students from applying to Texas schools, hurting us financially. This bill hurts universities' standings in Texas, creating a less competitive field nationwide, ultimately hurting our financial investment in education.

As a student of Anthropology and Sociology at a UT school, my degree is largely based on learning from a variety of communities and their voices on their own ways of living, being, and interactions within each other/amongst others; additionally, my degree also looks at sociopolitical impacts of a society on folks, whether it is the legal system, sociocultural rules, access to opportunities, etc. This bill negatively affects students, such as me, who want to get academically enriched to add to society in ways that benefit us all as a community, state, and nation. Censoring and/or controlling curriculum, and the ability for professors to teach such, is going to harm us all, not help us. Texas is not a monolith, and our public education should reflect as such.

Jamie Stoops, Dr.
Self
Houston, TX

I am writing to raise concerns in opposition to SB 37. I am proud to work as a professor at a Texas community college, where I am surrounded by dedicated colleagues and remarkable students. I believe this bill would do nothing to improve higher education in the state of Texas, and in fact has the potential to do serious harm to faculty and students alike. If signed into law, this bill would micromanage and politicize colleges and universities across the state, adding unnecessary new levels of bureaucracy in the process. Among other elements, this bill would place decisions over curriculum, hiring, and faculty grievances into the hands of political appointees. These processes should remain nonpartisan and nonpolitical. In addition, this bill would seriously damage shared governance and the work done by faculty senates. Faculty members are the people who are interacting with students on a day-to-day basis, which means that faculty perspectives are important for making sure that policies and curriculum choices reflect student needs and interests. Preserving shared governance in the form of faculty senates or councils therefore benefits not only faculty, but students and colleges as a whole. For all of these reasons, I ask you to support Texas students, colleges, and faculty by opposing the passage of SB 37. Thank you for your time.

Cristina Soriano, Dr
Self
Austin, TX

Chair and Members of the Committee, My name is Cristina Soriano, and I'm a faculty member at a Texas Public University, where I teach colonial history of Latin America. Beyond historical content, I train students in the analysis of primary sources, the critical evaluation of narratives, and the development of independent, evidence-based thought. I write today out of deep concern for the implications of this bill on academic freedom and the essential relationship to trust between educators and students.
SB 37 rests on the troubling and false premise that university professors "indoctrinate" students. In reality, our mission is the opposite: to equip our students with the intellectual tools to question, analyze, and challenge assumptions - including our own. We don't teach what to think, but how to think. This bills threatens to undermine that core mission.
As Professors and researchers, we undergo years of rigorous academic training. We are deeply committed to scholarly integrity, evidence-based analysis and open inquiry. More over, our courses and research are already subject to peer review, institutional oversight, and university processes. Politicians and governing boards, however well-intentioned, are not equipped to review or evaluate our work and research. Most concerning is the climate of mistrust and surveillance this bill would introduce into the classroom. It would disrupt the trust essential to education, a trust that allows students to ask critical questions, express disagreement and grow intellectually in a space guided by scholarly rigor.
If passed, SB 37 would not protect students, it would instead impoverish and limit their education. In addition, this bill suppress intellectual diversity and academic freedom.
I urge to vote against this bill. Defending higher education means trusting its professionals and preserving the integrity of the academic process.
Thank you for your time and attention,

Elaine Chapman
Self
Abilene, TX

I do not agree with support for this bill! The government should not be interfering in this area of education

Krish Nath
Self - Student
Austin, TX

Senate Bill 37 will restrict the diversity of ideas on university campuses and result in the further politicization of state universities in Texas. As a K-12 student in Texas currently, I may go to a state university in Texas, and I do not want my educational experiences to be curated by the state of Texas. College is supposed to be a time when you are exposed to all kinds of ideas and a formative time for those who have the privilege of experiencing it, but how can universities present diverse ideas when state-appointed boards are given major power to dictate what is taught?
In addition, when discussions about race, gender, sexuality, politics, religion and other sensitive subjects are restricted on campus, how does one expect to be exposed to a diversity of ideas? Ideas surrounding race, gender, sexuality, politics, and religion that do not align with the conservative values of those who sponsor this bill will always exist, and they are just as valuable as any other set of ideas. No amount of legislation can erase LGBTQIA+, immigrant, racial minority, female, and left-wing viewpoints, and the students in Texas state universities deserve to hear all perspectives and make up their own minds about what they want to believe.
Two of the founding principles of the United States are the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press, and both of those are in our Constitution because the Founding Fathers of this country knew the importance of free access to ideas. Without access to all ideas and perspectives, democracy stands in danger of crumbling to extreme ideologies and radical, anti-democratic practices. The oldest university in the state of Texas is 185 years old, and that legacy of quality university education to be protected and upheld, and a high quality university education cannot be controlled by the state government.
SB 37 will damage the freedom of students in the Texas state university system to learn and be exposed to all ideas. Exposure to diverse ideas and beliefs is crucial for a university education, and with laws that restrict sensitive conversations and give state-appointed boards massive power over what is and isn't taught in public universities, that exposure is lost. The United States was founded on free thought, and free access to ideas is the bedrock of our democracy. If you support the values of the United States and the state of Texas, then I urge you to vote against Senate Bill 37.

Brianna Powell, Teacher
Self
Abilene, TX

We don't want government-controlled colleges.

Lisa Cockerell
Self/Teacher
Stamford, TX

Mr. Lambert has an obligation to stand up against government overreach into what is taught in our public institutions of higher education since he caved to the governor on vouchers. Professional educators and experts in their fields know far more about what to teach and how to teach it than a bunch of career bureaucrats and need the freedom to cover what students need to learn to become critical thinkers productive members of society who can stand up authoritarianism.

Lisa Cockerell
Self
Stamford, TX

Since Mr. Lambert caved on vouchers, he has an obligation to stand up

Jessica Atwood
Self
Abilene, TX

Mr. Lambert you let us down with SB 2. Don’t do it again. SB 37 threatens higher education. Please vote no

Ashton Jeffers
Self/Recent graduate of a Texas institution of higher education
New Braunfels, TX

I oppose this bill because it would heavily restrict what can and cannot be taught in universities and in higher education while also punishing faculty and staff who have courses that are not deemed satisfactory with the board’s opinions. As a recent university graduate, I was consistently challenged in my courses and encouraged by faculty to approach new concepts of learning I hadn’t known of in my years of high school. I also know that not every course at a higher education institution is able to be taught based on how many students register and if other faculty also approve it. My universities encouraged my will to learn and to push my understanding a little further with new pedagogies and ideologies. To approve this bill means to give into the fear of what is different to the ideas we already hold. We should not fear wanting to learn more, even when it’s something we have yet to consider in our own lives.

Robin Dennis
Self
Abilene, TX

Leave our state supported colleges and universities alone. Texas has messed up our K-12 public schools, we don’t need our higher ed messed up as well.

Jennifer Conner
self
The Woodlands, TX

I urge you to Vote NO on SB 37. This is a disgraceful bill. Institutes of higher learning are designed for humans to learn to think for themselves. This bill infantilizes the university setting. Texas will lose it's best professors and lose research money. NO on SB 37.

Michele Richey
self
Houston, TX

This is a violation of both free speech and the academic integrity of our state's colleges. Instead of not wanting folks to learn critical thinking skills so they can critically think about the MAGA/Republican agenda, maybe you should look at your agenda and alter it so it stands up to critical thinking. Targeting certain areas of study as well as certain topics because you don't like them is some real Nazi shit. If you have to censor information and lie in order for the public to support your agenda, the problem is your agenda, not an educated public.

Shanzeh Mirza
self, student
Sugar Land, TX

Ethnic studies have monumentally enlightened me in civil rights and the histories of different Americans across different times, and this is a privilege that every student deserves access to. I have left my ethnic studies classes with a deeper, more honest understanding of the United States—its injustices, its resilience, and the ongoing responsibility we share to build a better future. Like its people, this country is a work in progress. No other class has shown me that truth as powerfully as those centered on history, race, and inequality.
A valid concern raised by the Texas Tribune is that this bill could trigger a brain drain from Texas universities like UT, as esteemed professors may choose to leave—or avoid coming altogether—due to restrictions on teaching subjects like history, race, and inequality. The consequences of such legislation are both immediate and long-term. Students paying for a public Ivy-caliber education may no longer receive it, as the scholarship and faculty that define such an education will no longer be present. Those who can afford to may leave the state for institutions that uphold academic freedom and critical inquiry. In turn, Texas risks not only a loss of intellectual prestige but also the tuition revenue from students who once valued its universities. Even for those who remain—especially students who can only afford in-state tuition—the quality of education will not match what UT once offered or what peer institutions still provide. These students may also face limited opportunities in liberal arts-related careers due to reduced institutional support. Over time, the reputation of UT as a “public Ivy” and as a place where students get their money’s worth may erode. More troubling, we’ll likely witness a decline in liberal arts enrollment and in the study of race, history, and inequality—an outcome with serious social consequences. We have progressed only this far in the United States in terms of ensuring that the common man can pull himself from his bootstraps, because education ensured that he had boots. It was education on race, history, and inequality that equipped leaders like Chief Justice Marshall to challenge and help dismantle segregation in Brown v. Board of Education. These very subjects—now at risk of being banned—are what prompted universities to reach out to all communities, helping young Americans gain access to higher education and build generational wealth. Education on these topics is why we have a more unified society, because we have empathy and solidarity for one another on issues of class, race, opportunities. Texas, as a part of the US, is a woven fabric whose holes of literacy gaps and racial disparities in unemployment are being stitched together by the work that academia has tirelessly researched and published. Work that has proven necessary to the public good.

Beverly Redd
Self
Klein, TX

I urge you to vote no for this bill. The state should not interfere in the curriculum of a college or university. This bill will unnecessarily restrict a creative environment in TX colleges and universities undermining the value of a post secondary education in Texas and making these schools less competitive for high achieving students.

Julia Mickenberg, Dr.
myself
Austin, TX

I am strongly opposed to SB 37. For more than twenty years I have been honored to teach students, of all backgrounds and persuasions, about American history and culture. I begin my courses by making clear that I am not interested in teaching anyone what to think. I am teaching students how to think and to express themselves and their ideas. I make clear to students that they need not share my opinions. But they do need to make rational arguments that they can support with valid evidence.

Students who manage to identify my political views--even when they don't agree with them- have explicitly praised my openness to all viewpoints.

As part of a project I undertook with the Provost Teaching Fellows I surveyed liberal arts alumni who had graduated between 1995 and 2016. It did take respondents as long as five years to find satisfying and remunerative work–longer than STEM majors. But 70% find the work they do meaningful and are satisfied with their income. Moreover, a large percentage of them are in leadership roles, from CEO to school principal. They also reported having a high degree of flexibility in their thinking, which has allowed them to move between different career paths. And they are involved in their communities and feel empathy for people whose experiences are different from their own.

This bill, which focuses on “workforce readiness”--with only two years post-graduation to consider students’ income–could decimate the liberal arts, which prepare students to be nimble-minded professionals and civic-minded community members. The liberal arts are essential to making college students educated and not merely trained to do a particular job.

My students have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, journalists, leaders in business, teachers, and professionals of all kinds. I’ve received letters from students a decade after they’d had classes with me, describing how much my teaching shaped who they’d become. My research has won multiple awards. This bill will make it difficult to do my job because allowing students to grapple with difficult issues is essential. Now I will fear retribution if we discuss anything controversial.

The Texas constitution specifies that the state create a university of the "first class.” This bill will prevent UT from being a university of the first class. Shared governance and academic freedom, the ability to teach and research without fetters, are the hallmarks of all great universities. A bill like this would remove our standing in the AAU (American Association of Universities), which comprises the leading research universities. We will no longer be able to attract top faculty, major grants and outstanding graduate students from around the world. Our prestige will suffer immensely, Texas students will suffer, and the Texas economy will suffer. Passage of this bill would represent a hollow ideological victory because all of us would lose. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective.

Anastasia Baginski, Dr.
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Mcallen, TX

SB 37 will seriously diminish the quality of higher education in Texas. I have taught in college and university systems, public and private, across the U.S. and Texas public higher education is already not competitive in terms of research and student learning with the rest of the country. Further restricting academic independence through faculty governance and course content will seriously undermine Texas’ competitiveness with other states. More high quality students will leave the state for their education and Texas will lose a highly skilled workforce.

Sean Whitten
SELF
Plano, TX

To Senator Creighton and Members of the Texas GOP,

Let me be crystal clear: Senate Bill 37 is an act of educational sabotage.

This bill is not policy—it's a political stunt. A weaponized, cynical attempt to whitewash history, criminalize critical thinking, and turn Texas public universities into ideological echo chambers. SB 37 would impose state-sanctioned censorship on college classrooms and turn educators into targets for doing what they were trained—and trusted—to do: teach the truth. the WHOLE truth.

You are not preserving tradition. You are not protecting students. You are not defending liberty.

What you are doing is launching a full-scale assault on intellectual freedom, on the autonomy of Texas universities, and on the students who deserve a future shaped by facts, data-informed, valid and verifiable, facts—not propaganda.

SB 37 is the kind of legislation that cowards write and autocrats celebrate. It muzzles the truth about race, power, inequality, and American history in a vain attempt to preserve a palatable mythology over the messy reality of our shared past. It's performative governance with permanent consequences.

If you pass this bill, you will:

**Shame Texas on the national stage as a state hostile to academic freedom

**Drive away top faculty, researchers, and students who refuse to be pawns in your culture war

**Reduce our universities to hollow institutions that produce compliance, not courage

Is that the legacy you want?

Texans are not fooled. We see SB 37 for what it is: an authoritarian power grab disguised as education reform. And we will not go quietly. Students, educators, alumni, and community leaders are organizing—because we refuse to let fear dictate what can be taught and what must be hidden.

If you believe in freedom, in truth, and in the future of Texas, you will kill this bill now.

Stand down on perpetuating white supremacy and be ten toes down for the truth.

Sincerely, Sean Whitten

Mike Queen
Self
Houston, TX

The public university systems have been a source of tremendous growth and development for both the citizens and institutions of Texas.
There are already a number of established organizations that have overseen issues such as accreditation, and performance standards for higher education. The history of the Legislature trying to impose its priorities and short-term political objectives has not fared well in previous interventions. And the current environment certainly does not indicate the results of any such proposed actions will be any better.
In the same way, citizens do not look to the legislature to establish medical treatments or engineering design standards, it doesn't seem reasonable to expect the Legislature to be well suit to establish educational standards.

Daniel Morales
Self, Law Professor
Houston, TX

The following statement is made as a private citizen and is not in any way endorsed by my employer the University of Houston.
This bill is a solution is search of a problem; if passed it will significantly damage the excellence of institutions of higher education that generations of Texans have painstakingly built.
In my Constitutional law classroom I teach students how to think for themselves. In order to do so, I need to be able to assign texts at the cutting edge of human knowledge that my students will disagree with. It's only through being exposed to difficult, well-reasoned arguments that are in conflict with students' own views—and even values—that students really learn what views and values they hold. SB 37 threatens to destroy this delicate process of learning by injecting into the classroom an expectation that disagreement with a text is not a challenge to be thought through and argued with, but instead an imposition of an "ideology." How can I get students to think against a text if I now cannot assign a challenging or provocative text for fear of being reported to SB 37's ideological conformity investigative squad?
Universities cannot be exactly like corporations and be any good. For universities to be good they have to draw on the expertise of all their expert faculty, each and every one of whom has spent a lifetime studying a narrow but vast sliver of human knowledge. You need these people to give their input into university decisions or you will lose what makes universities great—this amalgam of different knowledges coming together to benefit students and the public. The faculty senate has never controlled a university, but it has always provided its input into university policy. Why on earth would you want that to stop and replace the collective wisdom of faculty (many of whom passionately disagree with each other) for the perspective of a single individual or board? To work universities simply have to gather information from people with a variety of perspectives and roles to make good institutional decisions for their students.
Lastly, this bill's paternalistic and narrow vision of the value of higher education will impoverish Texas for generations. The provision on ROI of degree program has so many problems, but fundamentally it reminds me of the old saw about the man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Does Texas really not want to produce artists and musicians and writers of novels simply because those students choose to live a life that is often richer in ideas that in remuneration? Why does the legislature think it should make that decision for them? This bill is a fit of spite. Please oppose it with every fiber of your being—do so for the Great State of Texas.

Sarah Scott, Dr.
Self - University Professor
Corpus Christi, TX

Testimony in Opposition to Texas Senate Bill 37

May 5, 2025

Sarah Scott
Texas House District 32
Representative Todd Hunter

Dear Members of the Texas House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Sarah Scott. I am a Professor of Criminal Justice at a Texas public university with 18 years of experience in higher education. I am also a proud fifth-generation Texan and a first-generation college graduate. The opportunities I've had because of Texas's public universities have shaped my life and career.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 37 and the threat it poses to the integrity and effectiveness of Texas higher education.

While the bill covers many areas, I want to focus on its most troubling feature: the transfer of authority over curriculum and academic programs from qualified faculty to politically appointed external boards. This change would severely weaken the quality of higher education in our state.

My role as a faculty member requires a PhD—earned through more than a decade of rigorous training and research. I specialize in criminal justice, a field I have studied, taught, and worked in for more than half my life. The idea that politically appointed board members—without academic or subject-matter expertise—should dictate what is taught in my classroom is both impractical and deeply concerning. It would undermine my ability to effectively prepare students for careers in law enforcement, corrections, and other public service roles.

Decisions about curriculum are already made through a careful, collaborative process. As a program coordinator, I regularly propose curricular updates, schedule classes, and ensure our program aligns with student needs, workforce demands, and academic standards. I typically consult with academic advisors and our community advisory council—composed of regional criminal justice leaders—before any proposal is brought to a vote by our faculty. These recommendations then move through college and university curriculum committees for approval. This process is already thorough and time-intensive. Recent reforms have reduced the timeline from two years to about eight months. Adding layers of external bureaucracy will only delay responsiveness and reduce our ability to meet evolving workforce needs.

Faculty take their responsibility for curriculum and instruction seriously. These decisions must remain within the academic community, informed by the expertise of those who teach, advise, and support students every day.

I urge you to vote no on SB 37.

Sincerely,
Sarah Scott

Erika Bsumek, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

My name is Dr. Erika Bsumek. I'm submitting my comments as private citizen.

I've taught American history for over 25 years, 23 of them in Texas public universities and I teach courses in the core curriculum. I'm writing to oppose SB37.

Today's college students are energetic, curious, and engaged thinkers. My own former students have gone on to work in a variety of capacities in the public and private sector: tech companies, financial institutions, law firms, public and private schools, government, and so on. They value learning new material, material that they did not encounter in high school that helps them see the world in new ways.

One core class I teach is called Building America: Engineering Society and Culture, 1866–1985. In this class, we use infrastructure as an organizing theme. Students explore how our society was set up and laid out—quite literally. For instance, we study the Brooklyn Bridge and the engineer who designed it (John A. Roebling), examining how technological innovation, labor, immigration, government structures, economics, and public policy intersected to shape modern America. We also study the Irish immigrants who built the bridge, and how Roebling, a German immigrant and inventor whose innovations transformed the US, saw the US as a place where he could turn his ideas into action.

In order for this class to get approved, it went through many layers of oversight. And, as others have said, it takes more than a year to get approval for such a course.

I teach students in my classes how to analyze sources, weigh evidence, communicate clearly, and think critically—skills that are in high demand across industries. Our classes encourage discussion and disagreement, and students routinely express a wide range of perspectives. This is not indoctrination; it's making them workplace ready.

SB37 undermines the autonomy of educators and threatens to restrict the very kind of open, skill-based learning that prepares students for the real world. History is not a set of talking points—it is a method of inquiry. Our students deserve the freedom to engage with complex ideas and develop the tools they need to succeed, both as professionals and as citizens.
Thank you.

Penny Bradshaw
self
The Woodlands, TX

Has Texas really come to this? Authoritarian rule? It's already too much to observe that our president is leading our country to a dictatorship.

I was astounded to read that Lt. Governor Dan Patrick posted on social media that "professors who support Critical Race Theory should pack their bags and head to a friendly blue state," and that, "UT-Austin's faculty senate had its power stripped and learned that the Legislature does have authority over faculty senates after all! I will not stand by and let looney Marxist UT professors poison the minds of young students with Critical Race Theory."

Seriouslly? Is this how our Texas "leaders" speak about educational institutions in our state? This doesn't seem to be the kind of PR that would draw students to Texas universities and colleges. Our governor invites everyone to come to Texas - but I wonder how many will come if they think our institutions of higher learning are as bad as the Lt. Governor says they are?

I am disappointed by this hateful rhetoric. I implore you to VOTE NO on this heinous bill.

Penny Bradshaw

Holly Gorman
Self, Texas Parent
AUSTIN, TX

My children are currently in elementary school, but it's never to early to start thinking about their future. The University of Texas at Austin is currently a great flagship research institution that I would be proud to send my children to—but passing this bill would change that. Under SB 37, faculty will no longer be allowed to use their expertise in their field to create and improve course content and degree offerings. I would never send my children to be educated at a school where politicians—not subject matter experts—determined what was taught.

In addition, faculty will be limited in what they can say on certain topics and faculty will not be able to evaluate applicants for faculty positions. This means that the best researchers and educators will not stay in Texas, but rather go to institutions where their input about their working conditions is welcomed and appreciated. The many fine universities in Texas will no longer be great research institutions.

Linda Evans, Ms
Self-retired
Conroe, TX

Vote NO SB 37!

This is a terrible for students, faculty, and all people in Texas who care about good, solid educations for our college students. The state government does NOT need to have more oversight on course curriculum, final say in hiring of faculty, ability to cut minor programs with low enrollment and an easier path to fire tenured faculty. One of the bill's major focuses is on weakening faculty senates, which are boards made up of faculty members from across the university who make recommendations to university administrations based on education policy, faculty grievances and other issues. This bill infringes on the academic freedom to learn for the student and the freedom to teach and freedom to research for the professor.
Narrow-minded views and limited ideas will not produce students we need as our problem solvers in the 21st century!

Vote NO on SB 37!

Christine Harrison, Dr.
Self
Houston, TX

Please keep Texas a place where diversity of thought and speech is valued, respected and welcomed. Be careful with ideas that limit these foundational values. Students need to be exposed to new ideas and perspectives.

Charlotte Canning, Dr.
Self
Austin, TX

I am testifying as a private citizen with professional experience teaching at a Texas public university for over 30 years and as a parent of a young Texan.
Conversation and accountability between institutions of higher education and the people of the state of Texas is essential. My colleagues and I have devoted our careers to fulfilling the state constitution's requirement that a "university of the first class" provide for the "promotion of literature, and the arts and sciences." University curriculum supports students' understanding of these subjects as interrelated and essential forms of knowledge. That knowledge helps them enjoy full and successful lives.
My testimony against SB 37/HB 4499 is not a rejection of oversight by the people of the state of Texas. Instead, it is a call for a prudent use of resources. All those who work for the state must act in fiscally responsible ways when spending taxpayers' money. This bill creates complicated, often vague, layers of bureaucracy including the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of Excellence in Higher Education. The operational costs of this new bureaucracy will hugely outweigh any benefits. A ballooning bureaucracy is not likely to improve educational outcomes. Quite the opposite, in fact, meeting the demands of SB 37/HB 4499 as law will limit the time available to meet student needs and create curriculum that keeps pace with 21st century developments.
Similarly, the removal of faculty from various administrative processes in universities and colleges will raise the cost of education exponentially. Currently, faculty do a lot of service work in guiding curricular ideas through the approval processes of the university leadership, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Board of Regents. They do not receive additional compensation for this labor, but do it because they want students to have access to the best education possible. If faculty are prohibited from doing this work institutions will have to hire a large number of people at great expense to meet the demands of this legislation.
A specific example may be found in the provision denying faculty a role in the faculty grievance/discipline process. Faculty do not make final decisions on grievances. They make recommendations to presidents who make the final decision. An important benefit to executive leadership currently is that faculty grievance committees may dismiss cases. This is an enormously resource efficient policy as it saves the university and its leadership time and money. Additionally, faculty are not paid for this work over and above their salary. A process that omits faculty will be much more expensive and time-consuming for university leadership.

What I want as a private citizen, educator, and parent in Texas is for state funds to benefit students directly. Young people flock to our state universities because they know that Texas is one of the best places in the country for higher education. Collaboration,

Eric Williams
self
AUSTIN, TX

My name is Eric Williams, a supporter of academic freedom and the right of students to attend colleges and pursue their studies free of onerous oversight in Texas, and I'm contacting you to urge you to vote NO on SB 37. As the full text of the bill has not been made available for public examination, I am forced to use the vague summaries provided as a guide for my discussion - this alone seems to be enough to vote NO on the bill, but I will offer some brief comments anyway, in hopes of convincing you that this bill, far from protecting students, actually harms them and would irreparably destroy higher education in Texas.
First of all, part of SB 37 seeks to destroy certificate programs; this is a very short-sighted approach that would be deleterious for students seeking jobs after college. As an independently employed expert consultant, I have had many opportunities to discuss with organizations and firms hiring practices, as well as actually advise on hiring decisions, and consistently one of the best guides for evaluating candidates, particularly in the early stages, is to look for these certificates, minors, etc, that they pursued and were awarded during college. On paper, many candidates look identical, but someone with a "Environment and Sustainability" certificate immediately stands out. While these programs may graduate only a small number of people per year, they have an outsized impact on the students' futures and employment, as they provide prospective employers a quick and very succinct indication of the seriousness and dedication of a prospective employee, as well as emphasizing "ancillary" skill sets that might not be immediately legible in two-page CV or resume. SB 37 directly attacks these and other programs that are of proven value to a student, particularly in the post-college job market.
Similarly, it is my understanding that SB 37 purports to radically restructure the university by eliminating or dismantling majors deemed, by some nebulous board of non-experts, to be "non-economic" as defined by loan repayment schedules and post-college employment. Supporters of SB 37 have even gone so far as to cite persistent student debt as an indicator that the university is not "doing enough" for students and needs to be reined in. This is fallacious; the reason student debt has increased is because the state of Texas has seen fit to slash funding to the university and refused to support tuition freezes or subsidies, forcing student to seek supplemental support through loans.
Furthermore, the departments and majors with the highest levels of loans among students are the Law School, the Nursing School, and the Education School - as written, SB 37 will punish lawyers, nurses, doctors, and teachers by attacking these enormously important disciplines, all of which often (unfortunately) requires early career workers in these field into low paying "apprenticeships."
In conclusion, I strongly urge you to vote NO on SB 37!

Carolyn Mitchell, Rev.
self
Conroe, TX

I believe that SB 37 would impose a series of burdensome and punitive measures that will stifle critical thinking, undermine shared governance, and politicize higher education. Additionally, this bill infringes on the academic freedom to learn for the student and the freedom to teach and freedom to research for the professor.
I urge you to vote NO on SB37
Rev. Carolyn Mitchell
Conroe, Texas

Lucia Queen
Self - retired Texas teacher, graduate of University of of Texas.
Houston, TX

I would like to voice my strong objection to SB37. Not only would it be a black mark on our excellent public universities and deter top faculty and students from coming here, it would compromise intellectual vitality and academic freedom of the institutions' research and teaching. We want to attract the best and the brightest - and the curious and open minded - who want to contribute to our society, not to be held back. Not my vision for our great state!!
Thank you for considering all opinions.

Casey Charleston
Self - Student
Austin, TX

SB37 is a bill that is harmful because talking about topics including diversity in higher education is important.

Laura Weaver
self/retired
The Woodlands, TX

Our state universities enjoy a reputation for providing excellent academic experiences. SB 37 would risk this well-earned reputation by allowing politics to take over many aspects of the system. SB 37 would allow politicians to have more oversight on course curriculum, the final say in hiring of faculty, an ability to cut minor programs with low enrollment and plow an easier path to fire tenured faculty. This gross over-involvement in higher education risks the very system that has been thriving and educating our future leaders. Do not mess with our higher education by politicizing the process. I urge you to vote against SB 37.

Laura Gallier
Self-retired CPA
Houston, TX

Please oppose SB 37. I listened to the testimony in the Senate as well as Lt Governor Patrick's comments afterwards and it is frightening to me. I oppose committees that would be appointed by the governor to monitor universities; university processes such as hiring and curriculum should be done by higher education professionals, not politicians, and certainly not for political vengeance against "woke" ideology. As Senator Creighton defended the bill, the concerns and questions of the Senators of color were very compelling to me. The idea of "merit" based appointments to the oversight committee, well of course the appointees will be qualified, but a diversity of life experiences is extremely important: the perspectives of people who have suffered generationally under state oppression and those who feel they have been harmed by affirmative action and DEI are valid, and there are plenty of people with "merit" representing every perspective. My fear, based on the reaction of Lt Gov Patrick to this bill passing in the Senate, is that it will be used to enact political vengeance. We are better than that. Texans have come a long way, and we are stronger when we recognize that merit is present in a lot of different perspectives. Teaching about the oppression of women, who were denied the vote until years of fighting for it, is not a distortion of history. Teaching the truth about the years of work it took, through court battles, strikes, protests, etc, to get beyond say the Chinese Exclusion Act, to get Voting Rights, to repeal Jim Crow, and to tell the truth about what life was like before these battles succeeded, is not a distortion. There is no "objective" history; we can't recount every single moment that passed since the dawn of time; professional judgment is required; that doesn't make things distorted, it just means that history can be told a lot of different ways depending on what is included and what is left out. This bill is just really scary to me, and I hope it doesn't pass. For reference, I'm an elderly straight white college-educated woman; I lean libertarian in my political philosophy. I placed out of college history so I don't know what I would have been taught, but most of what I know about US history, I learned after college. Even in high school history when we were taught almost exclusively about wars, I was curious what else was going on, what were the women doing, what were the people who weren't fighting doing, what was happening between wars. I didn't have the life experience to ask myself what were Black/Native American/LGBTQ/disabled people doing, even though I knew people from these groups. It would have been nice to have a heads up that there were other histories for me to explore, and to be guided through. I fear this bill will deny this to Texas college students, and they will be blind-sided when they enter a diverse workforce and have no idea about the struggles facing people who aren't like them.

Quentin Dixon
Self
Spring, TX

I am writing to urge you to vote NO on SB 37 when it comes to a committee vote. As a parent/guardian of two high school juniors who are currently exploring colleges to apply to, I am planning NOT to send them to Texas state colleges or universities should SB 37 pass. Although disguised as a bill to eliminate Critical Race Theory from Texas state universities, in fact the bill usurps the power of university administrators and faculty members to implement the curricula and teaching methods that their respective research shows is sound and effective. "Critical Race Theory," like other objectionable theories, should be taught in universities in appropriate classes because people must understand these theories in order to critically evaluate them. Most politicians and pundits who decry the bogeyman of "Critical Race Theory" do not show an understanding of it, and seem to think it is used across all academic disciplines, which it is not. It does our students a disservice to eliminate the teaching of objectionable theories or philosophies and seems to assume that students do not themselves possess the critical-thinking skills to reject objectionable theories. As a parent/guardian of two teenagers, I believe in the importance of exposing my students to a great variety of ideas, so that they can consider and evaluate them and figure out why some ideas are more persuasive than others. In addition, the attempts to weaken or abolish tenure and the power of faculty senates will simply encourage all faculty - no matter their discipline, no matter their personal stance on Critical Race Theory - to flee to states where they know they will be able to exercise academic freedom and self-governance. Texas will lose much of its expertise in biomedical sciences and engineering, as well as other fields, if tenure and faculty self-governance are threatened. As a parent/guardian, I do not want to send my students to a college or university where the best faculty will be fleeing. Higher education should not be politicized; vote NO on SB 37.

Nina trejo
self
austin, TX

I am strongly opposed to this SB… Teachers should be free to teach what is real and correct and not have it be limit by the state of texas

Raschel Harbison, Ms
Self / Parent
Kyle, TX

I am writing to voice my unequivocal opposition to Senate Bill 37, which would fundamentally undermine the quality, independence, and reputation of Texas public universities.
SB 37 represents an unprecedented intrusion of political authority into the academic and operational affairs of our state's higher education institutions. By shifting curriculum oversight and key governance decisions to politically appointed committees and stripping faculty of meaningful participation in shared governance, this bill threatens the very foundation of academic freedom that has made Texas universities respected leaders in research, teaching, and innovation.
Faculty expertise and peer review are the bedrock of a world-class university system. The bill's provisions to curtail faculty senates to advisory-only roles, impose top-down curriculum decisions, and subject tenured professors to politically motivated reviews will erode morale, drive away talented educators and researchers, and diminish the quality of education for Texas students. Such measures send a chilling message that academic inquiry and open debate are subordinate to political agendas, undermining the critical thinking and robust exchange of ideas that are hallmarks of higher education.
Furthermore, the creation of an ombudsman office with the power to investigate and penalize universities based on vague complaints opens the door to harassment, censorship, and the stifling of unpopular or challenging viewpoints. This is antithetical to the mission of higher education and will deter honest scholarship and dialogue.
SB 37's focus on eliminating programs with low enrollment or deemed insufficiently "workforce aligned" also threatens the diversity of academic offerings and the ability of universities to respond to emerging fields, cultural needs, and the interests of underrepresented communities. Universities are not merely job-training centers; they are engines of discovery, civic engagement, and social mobility.
Texas should be investing in academic excellence, not politicizing and micromanaging our universities. I urge you and your colleagues to reject SB 37 and instead support policies that respect institutional autonomy, uphold academic freedom, and foster innovation and opportunity for all Texans.

Karen Santhanam
Self
Cedar Park, TX

I oppose SB 37. I believe in academic freedom. We do not need the government setting curriculum on race, politics, religion and social beliefs in college classrooms. College should be a period to explore many different ideas on these issues. Vote NO on SB 37.