



StopSB202 Campaign
American Association for University Professors - Indiana State Conference
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Faculty, students sound the alarm on SB202 at coordinated events statewide

Indianapolis IN: Faculty, students, and staff held numerous events across the state on Monday to discuss Senate Bill 202 and its threat to Indiana’s economy, to the reputation of its world class universities and colleagues, and to students’ learning and experience.

Constituents at Purdue in West Lafayette, at Purdue-Fort Wayne, Purdue-Northwest, Indiana University-Indianapolis, Indiana University-East, Indiana State, and Ball State gathered in town halls, public educational events, work sessions, and more casual gatherings to talk about the threat SB202 poses, including its unfunded mandate in a non-budget General Assembly year, its positioning of government between teachers and their students at Indiana’s renowned universities and colleges, and its risk to students’ learning, particularly in professional programs that risk their accreditation to comply with the law as written.

Constituents and employees of Indiana State University, Purdue-Fort Wayne, Purdue-Northwest, Indiana University-East, and Indiana University-Indianapolis met in town halls or informational sessions on their respective campuses to discuss SB 202. Members of Ball State University gathered to educate passersby about the dangers of SB202 on campus, and members of Purdue University-West Lafayette posted flyers around campus and directed students to send letters to President Chiang asking for him to release a public statement regarding SB 202. Members of the Indiana University-Bloomington campus will hold a teach-in on Tuesday morning, and participate in a joint rally with other organizations in the afternoon. Events were coordinated through the Indiana AAUP State Conference effort to Stop SB202.

Dr. Jennifer Erickson (professor of Anthropology, and co-president of the AAUP-Ball State chapter), said, “Our goal today was to educate students and faculty at Ball State about SB202 and how it could threaten their learning experiences. We stood at “the scramble light,” the busiest intersection of campus, on a beautiful sunny day in February, which meant we got lots of foot traffic. We had conversations with students from across the political spectrum and we felt energized after all our conversations. We handed out flyers with QR codes linking to their state representatives and FAQs about the bill.”

Dr. Alisa Clapp-Itnyre (professor of English, Indiana University-East), who coordinated the event at Indiana University-East said, “IU East faculty gathered for conversation and solidarity on Monday. We were grateful for petitions to sign, calls to make, and the camaraderie we felt from fellow faculty's op-ed's and national organizations' statements against SB 202.”

INAAUP members also dropped off information packets at the Indiana Statehouse, each containing [over 670 pages of testimony](#), statements in opposition and other documentation from 7 faculty senates at state institutions, 4 state AAUP chapters, 4 professional organizations, a student government, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, commentary writers in the press, and letters from constituents sent to the House Education Committee in the last 2 weeks.

Dr. Alice Pawley (professor of engineering education at Purdue University), who helped drop off information packets said “State universities like Purdue are economic engines of the state, providing a stable tax base for their communities, and contributing to strong K-12 school districts. Purdue is a top 5 university producer of patents in the country, and Purdue faculty are the ones that do the research that are awarded these patents. Patents become royalties, new products, start-up companies, and more investment in jobs in our community. IU too provides over \$3.5B in income to the state economy every year, and supports over 60,000 jobs. I don’t know why the state legislature would want to risk such economic success with an unproven and expensive government-driven process?”

Dr. Moira Marsh, librarian at Indiana University-Bloomington and president of the Indiana AAUP State Conference (INAAUP), said “This bill is a classic unfunded mandate. IU estimates it would cost more than \$3.4M per year to implement the bill. That’s just one school. What is the cost for all 7 public universities in the state? \$10 million? \$20 million? Even the IGA fiscal note found the bill would be very expensive. But the Republican-led legislature won’t send it to Ways and Means to figure out how to pay for it.”

The author of SB 202, Senator Spencer Deery, has repeatedly argued (including in House Education Committee meetings) that criticism about the risks of the bill are invalid, and represent a misunderstanding of the bill. Dr. Stephanie Masta (Associate Professor in Purdue University (West Lafayette)’s College of Education, and President of AAUP Purdue) said, “Senator Deery repeatedly claims that faculty do not understand the bill which is the cause of our opposition. This is patently false. We are opposed because this bill threatens academic freedom, threatens the economic development of Indiana, and threatens the student experience. Higher education experts and professional organizations have weighed in on the harms of the bill – Senator Deery ignores this in favor of his own perspectives, which are not rooted in data and evidence.”

Prof. Masta went on, “We’ve all had students like Senator Deery in class. The issue isn’t about intellectual diversity. It’s Senator Deery’s belief that students should be allowed to proffer any opinion without pushback. That’s not how academic discourse or expertise function.”

Prof. David Nalbone (professor of psychology at Purdue-Northwest and chair of the Purdue-Northwest Faculty Senate) said, “This bill isn’t about protecting viewpoint diversity or it would have been written better, and the Republican Caucus would have listened to the concerns of their colleagues across the aisle, not trying to have the government solve a problem that does not really exist. Instead, this is government inserting itself where it isn’t needed.”

In addition to faculty senates, AAUP chapters and members, professional organizations, and individuals opposing SB202, sixty-two Indiana civil rights, faith-based and child-serving groups have signed a statement by the University Alliance for Racial Justice, identifying their concerns with the discriminatory impact of SB 202 on teaching about discrimination and racism. Signatories include the State NAACP as well as chapters in Indianapolis, the Gary, Terry Haute, and IU; the Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; the Indianapolis Urban League; the Indiana Poor People’s Campaign; the Indiana Public Health Association; the Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies; and Bethel AME Church. Over 900 Hoosier citizens from all walks of life and all parts of the state also endorsed the statement.

Said UARJ co-founder Dr. Russ Skiba (professor emeritus of school psychology, Indiana University Bloomington), “The legislature does not seem to comprehend the absolutely discriminatory nature of SB 202, but the citizens of Indiana clearly do. The penalties this bill seeks to impose on university faculty

are part of a national campaign by radical conservatives to limit or prohibit diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. This bill will drive faculty and students of color away from the state, and turn back the clock to a time when higher education in Indiana was designed by, for and about the white majority.”

The Indiana House of Representatives will vote on SB 202 at 1:30 pm on February 27, 2024.

The Indiana Conference of the American Association of University Professors (INAAUP) promotes cooperation among AAUP chapters at Indiana institutions of higher education. It works for the betterment of higher education in the state through promoting academic freedom, shared governance, and the rights of faculty.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP), with over 50,000 members and 500 local chapters, champions academic freedom; advances shared governance; and organizes to promote economic security for all academic professionals. Since 1915, the AAUP has shaped American higher education by developing standards and procedures that uphold quality education.

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[Photos from the statehouse packet drop are available here.](#)

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