



February 11, 2025

Re: Heterodox Academy's Opposition to HB 2348

Dear Chair Humphries, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Osman, and distinguished members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I'm writing to express Heterodox Academy's (HxA) opposition to HB 2348. [Heterodox Academy](#) (HxA) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership organization of more than 7,500 faculty, staff, and students who defend the ideals of open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement in higher education.

Last year, Kansas took a positive step towards protecting academic freedom when it enacted Representative Howe's [HB 2105](#), prohibiting public institutions of higher education from using political litmus tests in their faculty hiring or promotion processes. But enactment of HB 2348 would be a tremendous step backwards.

HB 2348 would end tenure at Kansas's public institutions of higher education both prospectively and retroactively. Ending tenure—especially in legislation that offers no alternative protections for academic freedom—would compromise the health of Kansas's public colleges and universities because it would leave faculty without key protections that allow for open inquiry to thrive.

Open inquiry — the ability to ask questions, share ideas, and challenge popular views and assumptions — is one of HxA's core values because it is essential to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. When faculty fear termination on account of the ideas they express, research they conduct, or lessons they teach, institutions of higher education no longer serve as places where ideas can freely be discussed, debated, and rigorously tested.

For those who are concerned that there are [precious few conservative faculty](#) in the academy, it's hard to see how making it easier to terminate faculty with dissenting views will improve the situation. Removing safeguards that prevent campus administrators or

others from weeding out dissenters will only make the problem of lack of viewpoint diversity worse.

Heterodox Academy has not taken a position on whether tenure is the only or even the ideal way to safeguard academic freedom. And we are aware of criticisms of tenure that suggest that we might find better ways to provide academic freedom to faculty. However, until a better alternative is presented, it's important to recognize that tenure is instrumental to preventing institutions from punishing faculty for expressing disfavored views in their scholarship, teaching, research or public statements. Indeed, data from a [2022 national survey](#) of faculty shows that non-tenure track faculty self-censor at much higher rates (42%) compared to their tenured colleagues.

Accordingly, until an alternative to tenure is offered that provides sufficiently strong protections for academic freedom, HxA opposes efforts to end tenure.

Thank you for your attention to our opposition to HB 2348. If you would like to discuss the bill, I can be reached at M: (215) 680-0988.

Respectfully,



Joseph Cohn
Director of Policy