

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTIONNo. 177 Session of
2005

INTRODUCED BY ARMSTRONG, BARRAR, BENNINGHOFF, BIRMELIN, BOYD,
CALTAGIRONE, CLYMER, CRAHALLA, CREIGHTON, FAIRCHILD, FICHTER,
FORCIER, GABIG, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, HERSHEY, JAMES,
W. KELLER, KILLION, LEH, METCALFE, R. MILLER, MUSTIO,
PHILLIPS, READSHAW, ROBERTS, ROHRER, SCHRODER, STERN,
R. STEVENSON, E. Z. TAYLOR, TRUE, WILT, YOUNGBLOOD,
DENLINGER, CIVERA, RAPP, FLEAGLE, FLICK, BASTIAN, BROWNE,
HARPER AND PAYNE, MARCH 29, 2005

AS AMENDED, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JULY 5, 2005

A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing a select committee to examine the academic
2 atmosphere and the degree to which faculty have the
3 opportunity to instruct and students have the opportunity to
4 learn in an environment conducive to the pursuit of knowledge
5 and truth at State-related and State-owned colleges and
6 universities and community colleges in this Commonwealth.

7 WHEREAS, Academic freedom and intellectual diversity are
8 values indispensable to the American colleges and universities;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, From its first formulation in the General Report of
11 the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure of the American
12 Association of University Professors, the concept of academic
13 freedom has been premised on the idea that human knowledge is a
14 never-ending pursuit of the truth, that there is no humanly
15 accessible truth that is not, in principle, open to challenge,
16 and that no party or intellectual faction has a monopoly on
17 wisdom; and

1 WHEREAS, Academic freedom is likely to thrive in an
2 environment of intellectual diversity that protects and fosters
3 independence of thought and speech; and

4 WHEREAS, Students and faculty should be protected from the
5 imposition of ideological orthodoxy, and faculty members have
6 the responsibility to not take advantage of their authority
7 position to introduce inappropriate or irrelevant subject matter
8 outside their field of study; therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That a select committee composed of the
10 Subcommittee on Higher Education of the Education Committee,
11 plus one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of
12 Representatives and one member appointed by the Minority Leader
13 of the House of Representatives, examine, study and inform the
14 House of Representatives on matters relating to the academic
15 atmosphere and the degree to which faculty have the opportunity
16 to instruct and students have the opportunity to learn in an
17 environment conducive to the pursuit of knowledge and truth and
18 the expression of independent thought at State-related and
19 State-owned colleges, universities and community colleges,
20 including, but not limited to, whether:

21 (1) faculty are hired, fired, promoted and granted
22 tenure based on their professional competence and subject
23 matter knowledge and with a view of helping students explore
24 and understand various methodologies and perspectives;

25 (2) students have an academic environment, quality life
26 on campus and reasonable access to course materials that
27 create an environment conducive to learning, the development
28 of critical thinking and the exploration and expression of
29 independent thought and that the students are evaluated based
30 on their subject knowledge; and

1 (3) that students are graded based on academic merit,
2 without regard for ideological views, and that academic
3 freedom and the right to explore and express independent
4 thought is available to and practiced freely by faculty and
5 students;

6 and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher
8 Education of the Education Committee of the House of
9 Representatives shall be chairman of the select committee, that
10 committee vacancies not affect the power of the remaining
11 members to execute committee functions and that committee
12 vacancies be filled in the same manner as the original
13 appointment; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the committee may hold hearings, take
15 testimony and conduct investigations within this Commonwealth as
16 necessary; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, THAT IF AN INDIVIDUAL MAKES AN ALLEGATION AGAINST A <—
18 FACULTY MEMBER CLAIMING BIAS, THE FACULTY MEMBER MUST BE GIVEN
19 AT LEAST 48 HOURS' NOTICE OF THE SPECIFICS OF THE ALLEGATION
20 PRIOR TO THE TESTIMONY BEING GIVEN AND BE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY
21 TO TESTIFY AT THE SAME HEARING AS THE INDIVIDUAL MAKING THE
22 ALLEGATION; AND BE IT FURTHER

23 RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk, with the Speaker's approval,
24 pay for the reasonable, appropriate and proper expenses incurred
25 by the committee; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the committee make a report of its findings
27 and any recommendations for remedial legislation and other
28 appropriate action by June 30, 2006, and that the committee may
29 extend the investigation for additional time, if necessary, but
30 no later than November 30, 2006.