

The University of Connecticut Chapter of

AAUP

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, INC.

1875 Storrs Road

Storrs, Connecticut 06268

Campus Mail: AAUP, U-6028

WWW.UCONNAAUP.ORG

Telephone: (860) 487-0450

Fax: (860) 487-0341

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Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Regarding HB 7236 - An Act Concerning Contract Policies at the University of Connecticut

Members of the Higher Education Committee:

My name is Michael Bailey and I am the Executive Director of the UConn Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (UConn-AAUP). UConn-AAUP is the collective bargaining agent for the over 2200 faculty at the University and its regional campuses. I am providing written testimony today in opposition to HB 7236 – An Act Concerning Contracting Policies at the University of Connecticut.

While I understand the intent of the legislation is to allow the University to bypass the extensive red tape of state procurement policies and enter into contracts using policies approved by the board of governors, the legislation is written much too broadly and may reach beyond the intended scope.

With almost 20 years of representing faculty in higher education settings, I have seen the wild swing of state funding support for public institutions go from over 35% of their operating budgets to, as in Michigan, less than 10% of state funding support for operating budgets. The result has been a competitive free-for-all.

Institutions are now competing at extremely high levels for student enrollment. Colleges and universities must enter into contracts with entities they have never had to in the past in order to stay competitive with other institutions. A sample of contracts includes Starbucks, Barnes and Noble, athletic fitness equipment, performing arts and national speakers.

But the state statutes governing the purchase of goods and services should remain under the auspices of state government and not allowed to be assigned to the UConn Board of Governors for policy consideration.

Also, state laws and purchasing requirements associated with Capitol projects must also stay under state statute and contracting board oversight, not assigned to an individual agency of the government.

I recommend the Committee work with the University to narrow the scope of this legislation, allowing for the intended flexibility with some contracts, not all.

Michael Bailey
Executive Director
UConn-AAUP