



March 6, 2024

## **Statement on Indiana Senate Bill 202**

The American Political Science Association (APSA) is deeply troubled by the sweeping restrictions and requirements proposed by Indiana [Senate Bill 202](#), a bill which would undercut the protections of faculty tenure, a core tenet of academic freedom. This bill would impose restrictions on the granting of tenure if faculty were unable to meet “free inquiry, free expression, and intellectual diversity” conditions in their classrooms. In addition, the bill would impose mandates on higher education institutions and faculty to comply with “various requirements and restrictions” related to intellectual diversity under threat of disciplinary action such as the revocation of faculty tenure or promotions, otherwise known as a post-tenure review process. The oversight of this post-tenure review process would be administered by the university’s board of trustees, which would also wield the authority to interfere with faculty tenure, hiring and disciplinary decisions based on concerns regarding ideological impartiality.

The proposed changes to faculty tenure and the codification of post-tenure review across the state of Indiana constitute serious violations of the principles of academic freedom. Placing the authority of post-tenure review in the hands of a board of trustees leaves the stability and advancement of faculty careers up to the ideological whims of the board rather than academic merit. Post-tenure review also disregards the fact that faculty already must undergo performance reviews through their home institutions and may be subject to a scrutinous process by their peers. Furthermore, attaching non-academic conditions to the granting of tenure risks stunting the freedom of faculty to engage in open classroom discussions with their students. These conditionalities indirectly prevent scholars from discussing a wide range of opinions in classroom settings, even in the pursuit of “intellectual diversity” or “neutrality”, which not only threatens academic freedom, but also prevents them from answering students’ more difficult and nuanced questions for fear of treading outside the arbitrarily set boundaries of acceptable classroom discussion.

APSA calls on Indiana lawmakers to reject this proposed bill and to reaffirm the protections of academic freedom at colleges and universities across the state of Indiana.

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*Founded in 1903, the American Political Science Association is the leading professional organization for the study of political science and serves more than 11,000 members in more than 80 countries. With a range of programs and services for individuals, departments, and institutions, APSA brings together political scientists from all fields of inquiry, regions, and occupational endeavors within and outside academe to deepen our understanding of politics, democracy, and citizenship throughout the world.*



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