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**PURDUE GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE**



**RESOLUTION No. SP24-R002**

**Resolution opposing Indiana Senate Bill 202**

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**Author(s):** Daniel Sinclair

**Sponsor(s):** Daniel Sinclair, Senator for Materials Engineering; Patrick DeBonis, Senator for Mathematics; Inga Nordgren, Senator for Human Development and Family Science; Luigi Dy, Senator for Aviation and Transportation Technology

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**WHEREAS,** On January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Indiana state senator Spencer Deery (District 23), authored Senate Bill 202, titled “A bill for an act to amend the Indiana Code concerning higher education<sup>1</sup>;

**WHEREAS,** SB 202 was authored with the intent of increasing the prevalence and status of conservative political and ideological content in Indiana universities, with Deery characterizing a culture of “hyper-politicalization and monolithic thinking of American higher education institutions<sup>2</sup>;

**WHEREAS,** Following the US Supreme Court’s decision in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*<sup>3</sup>, 50 bills have been proposed in 20 states to restrict diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at public universities and eliminate the consideration of racial inequalities in university admissions and policy<sup>4</sup>;

**WHEREAS,** Within language which appears to promote freedom of expression, SB 202 creates tools for partisan censorship of university instruction which may be used to harm the careers of faculty members and graduate students at Purdue University;

**WHEREAS,** SB 202 mandates the adoption of a disciplinary policy which requires a faculty member to do the following:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://iga.in.gov/pdf-documents/123/2024/senate/bills/SB0202/SB0202.03.ENGs.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.indianasenaterepublicans.com/deery-higher-education-reform-bill-passes-senate>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/20-1199\\_hgdj.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/20-1199_hgdj.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://thehill.com/homenews/ap/ap-u-s-news/ap-republican-lawmakers-are-backing-dozens-of-bills-targeting-diversity-efforts-on-campus-and-elsewhere/>

Article 39.5. Chapter 2. Sec. 2. (a) (2): “[introduce] students to scholarly works from a variety of political or ideological frameworks that may exist within the faculty member’s academic discipline or within courses the faculty member has taught;

(3) While performing teaching or mentoring duties within the scope of the faculty member’s employment, [refrain] from subjecting students to views and opinions concerning matters not related to the faculty member’s academic discipline or assigned course of instruction;”

**WHEREAS**, The aforementioned policy requirements will be enforced by disciplinary actions including termination, demotion and salary reduction;

**WHEREAS**, The aforementioned policy may be applied to “Sec. 3. (a) A person with whom the institution contracts to teach or mentor a student of the institution,” which includes graduate students employed as teaching assistants or research assistants;

**WHEREAS**, SB 202 requires Indiana universities to “Sec.4.(a)(1) Establish a procedure that allows both students and employees to submit complaints that a faculty member or person described in section 3(a)... is not meeting the criteria described in section 2(a)(1) through 2(a)(5);”

**WHEREAS**, Complaints would be referred immediately to “human resource professionals” and “supervisors” and would be available to “the board of trustees of the institution;”

**WHEREAS**, Any complaint by (Chapter 6. Sec. 2. (b)) “a petitioner who is not satisfied with a final decision by the institution” may be submitted to the commission for higher education for review;

**WHEREAS**, Purdue’s current academic freedom policy (I.A.4)<sup>5</sup> already obligates instructors to “avoid infringing upon their students’ right to learn by introducing irrelevant subject matter,” and discussion of SB 202 has not provided evidence of systematic violations or shortcomings of this policy;

**WHEREAS**, SB 202 restricts the freedom of faculty, lecturers and instructors to control course content, communicate their work, and criticize existing institutions, regardless of political affiliation, while these freedoms are protected in Purdue’s academic freedom policy;

**WHEREAS**, SB 202 imposes potential penalties through a complaint process which may be used to persecute graduate students with potentially disproportionate impacts on their academic and professional reputations;

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.purdue.edu/policies/academic-research-affairs/ia4.html#related>

**WHEREAS,** The aforementioned responsibilities and complaint risks will create a unique detriment to the recruitment of graduate students and faculty at Purdue University when compared to private universities and universities in other states, where no such policies exist;

**WHEREAS,** SB 202 amends trustee appointment policies in the state to replace two alumni-selected trustees with trustees appointed by the president pro tempore of the Indiana Senate and the speaker of the Indiana House of Representatives;

**WHEREAS,** Trustee appointments by a political body risk increasing politicization of university leadership, particularly in a state where a single party has held control of the state House, Senate, and Governorship since 2011<sup>6</sup>;

**WHEREAS,** The policies and disciplinary actions required by SB 202 contain ambiguity regarding definitions of “underrepresented” student groups, disruption of “protected expressive activity”, and “cultural and intellectual diversity”;

**WHEREAS,** This ambiguity may prevent uniform interpretation and application of SB 202’s clauses, allowing for selective defunding of specific diversity, equity, and inclusion practices at Purdue and punishment of specific student and faculty groups;

**WHEREAS,** The Purdue chapter of the American Association of University Professors<sup>7</sup> and the Purdue University Senate<sup>8</sup> strongly opposes the passing of SB 202 on the grounds that the bill ignores the role of university faculty in creating intellectual diversity, introduces restrictive bureaucratic and politicized processes, and contains language which allows for selective interpretation and application by future political bodies;

**WHEREAS,** A vote on SB 202 is expected in the Indiana House this week, making discussion of the bill a time-sensitive matter.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that PGSG supports freedom of expression and diversity of thought for students, staff, and faculty at Purdue University;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that PGSG supports the intellectual freedom of all academics and the pursuit of research, teaching, and learning without the impediment of political persecution;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that PGSG stands with the Purdue chapter of the American Association of University Professors in opposing SB202’s passage;

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<sup>6</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/Indiana\\_State\\_Senate](https://ballotpedia.org/Indiana_State_Senate)

<sup>7</sup> <https://aauppurdue.org/2024/02/joint-statement-of-iu-bloomington-and-purdue-west-lafayette-aaup-chapters-on-senate-bill-202/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.purdue.edu/senate/documents/meetings/Senate-Document-23-23-Regarding-IN-SB-202.pdf>

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that PGSG stands with the Purdue University Senate in opposing SB202’s passage;


**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that PGSG invites state representatives Chris Campbell and Sheila Klinker and state senators Spencer Deery and Ronnie Alting to a conversation with PGSG and the Purdue graduate student body;


**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that PGSG initiates a campaign to connect with students interested in public policy and encourage them to contact their state senators and representatives on legislative topics of interest to the campus population;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the PGSG will publish a letter opposing the passage of SB202 in its current form and condemning the politicization of higher education as a process which is harmful to all academics;

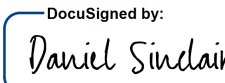
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that this letter will be sent to the Indiana House Education Committee.

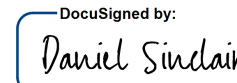
**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ENACTED** 21<sup>st</sup> day of February 2024.

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Somosmita Mitra  
President, PGSG

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Josiah Davidson  
Senate Chair, PGSS

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Andrew Mitchell  
Parliamentarian, PGSG

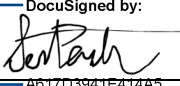
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Daniel Sinclair  
Author

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Daniel Sinclair  
Floor Sponsor, Senator for  
Materials Engineering

**Certification**

I, Secret Permenter, Senate Clerk of the Purdue Graduate Student Senate, do hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was passed and adopted by unanimous consent by the Purdue Graduate Student Senate of Purdue University, at a regular meeting thereof held on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of February 2024.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 2024.

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Secret Permenter  
Senate Clerk, PGSS