



Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny
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Legislation Text

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Motion of the Council of Allegheny County urging the administration at the University of Pittsburgh should pledge to remain neutral with respect to the faculty and graduate employees free exercise of their right to form unions, and to refrain from undertaking any activities, including but not limited to, the use of public funds or tuition dollars, to in any way impede or in any other way influence the ability of graduate employees and/or faculty to engage in free and open dialogue about their collective bargaining rights.

WHEREAS, non-profit intuitions of higher education are granted various benefits by the public in exchange for those institutions providing high-quality instructional and research services to the public, and those institutions are therefore obligated to meet the basic legal and moral standards of the communities they exist in; and

WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh is publicly subsidized as part of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education; and

WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh is the second largest employer in Allegheny County with 6,600 faculty members and 2,500 graduate employees; and

WHEREAS, the success of the 25,200 students enrolled in undergraduate programs at the University of Pittsburgh, of which 18,800 are Pennsylvania residents, depends on the institutional support of faculty and graduate employees; and

WHEREAS, all faculty and graduate employees at the University of Pittsburgh should be provided with institutional support sufficient for them to carry out their vital role as educators of the University's students; and

WHEREAS, all faculty and graduate employees, like all workers, should be paid fair wages and benefits that allow them to support themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, two-thirds of all faculty are in precarious non-tenure track positions, and many non-tenure track faculty members and graduate employees are paid wages which range from below to slightly above the federal poverty threshold; and

WHEREAS, non-tenure track faculty and graduate employees and are often forced to take on multiple jobs and/or to rely on public subsidies like Medicare, CHIP, WIC, community food banks and food stamps in order to survive; and

WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh has a \$3.53 billion endowment and can easily afford to pay living wages and should not treat employees in the fashion of corporations like Wal-Mart who prefer to subsidize profits with corporate welfare rather than properly compensate employees for their work; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and the graduate employees have each taken up organizing to build unions at

the University of Pittsburgh to address these issues and to address the lack of transparency in university operations, the need for increased diversity, and the lack of real protections against harassment and discrimination free of retaliation.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY,

Hereby strongly endorses the efforts of the Pitt Faculty Organizing Committee and the Graduate Student Organizing Committee at the University of Pittsburgh, and urges the University not to use public funds or tuition dollars to conduct anti-union activities, force graduate employees or faculty to attend meetings meant to pressure them away from creating a union with their colleagues, distribute anti-union literature meant to mislead and intimidate University employees from choosing to engage in collective action, or threaten the security of employees' jobs and funding sources.

IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT,

The Council hereby encourages the University of Pittsburgh (a) to respect the right of graduate employees and faculty to engage in free and open dialogue about their collective bargaining rights, (b) to recognize the graduate employees' and faculty members' legal right to organize under the Pennsylvania Public Employee Relations Act, and (c) to respect the established precedent under the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board that graduate employees and all faculty have the legal right to join together in a union.

IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT,

The administration at the University of Pittsburgh is hereby strongly encouraged to pledge to remain neutral with respect to the faculty and graduate employees' free exercise of their right to form unions.