



PRESS RELEASE – January 9, 2008

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Collective Bargaining Rights Bill passes committee

Senate Bill 353 heads to senate floor for vote

Madison, Wis – The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education recommended passage of Senate Bill 353, the Collective Bargaining Rights Bill, in a 4-1 vote today.

Currently, UW academic staff and faculty are the only state employees who do not have the right to vote on whether they would like to collectively bargain. SB 353, introduced by Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay), would extend this right to them. Passage of SB 353 would not create new bargaining units; it would simply extend to UW faculty and academic staff the right to decide for themselves whether or not they would like to collectively bargain.

Faculty and academic staff's right to decide on collective bargaining has long been the norm in many of the University of Wisconsin System's peer institutions. "Collective bargaining rights are currently enjoyed by academic staff and faculty in the public universities of each of Wisconsin's border states," stated Mark Evenson, president of The Association of University of Wisconsin Professionals (TAUWP), AFT-Wisconsin Local 3535. "By extending this basic, long-overdue right to its own faculty and academic staff, the University of Wisconsin System can only stand to gain in recruitment and retention."

It has been noted by many that the common sense nature of the bill has resulted in its bipartisan support. "Senate Bill 353 is neither a Democratic issue nor a Republican issue," stated Sen. Dan Kapanke, a Republican from La Crosse and member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Higher Education. "Rather, it is a simple matter of fairness."

"UW academic staff and faculty have been without a meaningful voice in the workplace for far too long," commented Kennedy. "Thank you, Senators Vinehout, Lassa, Plale, and Kapanke, for supporting their right to decide on collective bargaining."

Senate Bill 353, the Collective Bargaining Rights Bill, will now go to the full Senate for a floor vote. If passed, it will be sent to the Assembly for committee referral.