

## Attacks on tenure, course content, free speech and science

Compiled by Bob Parker for the AAUP UIUC Policy Committee

### List updated monthly

May 2022

If there is a pattern to the last month's AAUP-related news, it would be the attacks on tenure across many southern states.

Texas Lt. Governor Patrick, one of the stars of this monthly series of links—the same charmer who said, early in the pandemic, that older people should die so that younger people could keep the economy running—has [ordered a review of tenure](#) at public universities in Texas.

Florida [surveys students and faculty](#) and allows students to record classes without permission.

Florida Governor DeSantis [attacks](#) tenure and accreditation agencies.

Mississippi [revises the decision-making process](#) for tenure and for selecting a new president at state universities. More [here](#).

Louisiana [Senate creates task force](#) to reconsider tenure.

A Twitter thread on [teaching history in Florida](#) under the new restrictions.

PEN America on the current conditions of [educational gag orders](#) in K-12, colleges, and universities.

April 2022

On [pending legislation to censor teaching](#) in Ohio.

[Educational gag order](#) in Tennessee.

[Professor wins court suit against the University of Texas](#) for discriminating against her on the basis of pregnancy and sex in a tenure decision.

UCLA has attracted a lot of attention online by advertising for an assistant adjunct professor position in chemistry and biochemistry with an advertisement that says the position is “on a without salary basis. Applicants must understand there will be no compensation for this position.”

Georgia [bill to limit so-called divisive concepts](#) moves forward for K-12 but not for universities.

Video [honoring Matt Finkin](#).

Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick's [effort](#) to ban critical race theory, end tenure, and decide university curricula.

*Time Magazine* describes Tennessee and South Dakota leading the [movement to restrict so-called divisive concepts](#) in higher education.

*The Nation* on faculty [organizing to defend academic freedom](#).

*Inside Higher Education* on the [UIUC's new policy](#) to require diversity, equity, and inclusion statements for promotion and tenure.

Florida's [new limits on curricula](#) extending to public colleges and universities.

March 2022

Wyoming Senate [votes to defund](#) the University of Wyoming's Gender and Women's Studies program because they do not like the course descriptions.

AAUP manages to [delay bill to end tenure](#) in South Carolina.

I'm seeing statements about academic freedom from some of the states where politicians are most threatening it, including a [departmental statement at Texas A&M](#) and an AAUP [statement at George Mason University](#).

Given our discussion of departmental statements, it may be of interest to provide [this statement](#) from the UIUC Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and the Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center. It has also been endorsed by the Program in Jewish Culture and Society.

U of Missouri President [cuts selected faculty salaries](#) by 10-25%, as AAUP objects. (I have seen reports that his salary is 530,000.) (Long article, but easy to skim if you prefer.)

Against the votes of every Black lawmaker, Mississippi legislature [votes to ban critical race theory](#) from all public schools—K-12, community colleges, and universities. Also of interest, this [article](#) on the only course in Mississippi on CRT.

A [response to the attacks on tenure](#) from the Texas lieutenant governor and others.

February 2022

Mississippi [bans critical race theory](#) (I do not know whether this applies to public universities). Similar bans are proliferating across many states, as you have probably seen, some getting a lot of publicity (for example, Virginia) and some not (for example, Idaho), some just for K-12 and some—with varying degrees of explicitness—impinging on colleges and universities, all the more as they have the proverbial chilling effect.

The AAUP has built a [website](#) that tracks state legislation with educational gag orders, including public hearings and testimony.

'In a blistering opinion, [a federal judge ruled](#) that the University of Florida may not block professors from testifying against the state under the institution's conflict-of-interest policy.'

The AAUP [opposes proposed legislative restrictions](#) on searches for Florida university presidents. Here is the [AAUP Statement on Presidential Searches](#).

Chapman University [argues](#) that legal work (by one of the former president's attorneys) on political matters is not appropriate for university email and does not qualify for attorney-client privilege.

[Allegations of political interference](#) in the selection of a new chancellor for the Georgia University system. This controversy is getting extended and increasing coverage in Georgia.

Our colleague, chapter past-President Leslie Struble recommended this episode of Fresh Air on "[From slavery to socialism, new legislation restricts what teachers can discuss.](#)"

From the Florida House of Representatives, [video](#) (2:13) from the debate over the bill to make searches for university presidents secretive.

January 2022

Faculty organize nationally to pass a [resolution](#) "Defending Academic Freedom to Teach About Race and Gender Justice and Critical Race Theory."

This [article](#) reviews the national acceleration of threats to academic freedom, including examples both familiar and unfamiliar (at least unfamiliar to me).

[Direct reporting](#) of one notable example (which was not familiar to me) in the article above.

A [proposed bill](#) to expand new restrictions on what K-12 teachers can teach in New Hampshire by making the restrictions apply to public universities.

Penn State AAUP chapter [opposes actions](#) that may lead to terminating tenure-track assistant professor.

New book by Matthew C. Ehrlich on academic freedom at UIUC, with [February 3 event](#).

"In Heated Hearing, Lawyer Says Professors Who Sued U. of Florida Have 'Unclean Hands'": an [update](#) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on the suit by U of Florida professors against the university's limits on the right of faculty to provide expert testimony (available for free to those who sign up for the *Chronicle*).

December 2021

[Tenure at risk](#) in South Carolina. The national AAUP has issued a [statement](#).

[Legislative interference in Nebraska](#) as state senators call for the resignation of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln Chancellor after his new plan for diversity and inclusion.

The University of Florida has continued to enhance its reputation for academic freedom by [denying a new program](#) called "Critical Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Culture in Education" because it uses the words critical and race.

In yet another development in the Sunshine State, the University of Florida trustees doubled down on [endorsing restrictions on the rights of faculty](#) to testify as expert witnesses (an issue noted in last month's president's report).

November 2021

On the spate of laws that restrict academic freedom in the teaching of race, from the [AAUP](#).

In a still developing story, the University of Florida committed a major violation of academic freedom by refusing to allow faculty who disagree with the governor to testify as expert witnesses, as reported [here](#) in the *New York Times*. (If you cannot get to this October 29 article because of the paywall, you can reach it through the University Library website.) [Here](#) is a political scientist's response to the Florida debacle. In response to continuing pressure, the University of Florida has since [shifted its policy](#). They now plan, as well, to review their policy, but I have seen concerns expressed that the administrators who used the policy to violate academic freedom chose the committee members who will review them.

October 2021

[US Rightwing Group Targets Academics](#)

[U of Georgia's proposed revision of tenure](#)

[More from Georgia](#)

And in the category of you can't make this stuff up, the Wisconsin House of Representatives has passed a bill to ban critical race theory in K-12 (where it doesn't exist anyway) and to restrict the vocabulary that teachers can use in the K-12 classroom. At this writing, the bill has not yet passed the Senate, and if it does, it will likely be vetoed by the governor. What starts in K-12 could spread to colleges and universities, and in some states is already doing so. This [article](#) includes a list of the banned words and phrases.

September 2021

Florida, June 2021, bans critical race theory and restricts the teaching of American history (not clear whether this applies to public universities or only to K-12)

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/10/us/critical-race-theory-florida-ban-trnd/index.html>

Florida, June 2021, surveys campuses for students' and faculty's political perspectives

<https://thehill.com/changing-america/enrichment/education/559881-florida-gov-signs-law-requiring-students-and-faculty-be>

Pennsylvania, June 2021, a bill proposed that would limit which speakers could speak and which readings could be assigned (p. 3)

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=PDF&sessYr=2021&sessInd=0&billBody=H&billTyp=B&billNbr=1532&pn=1679>

South Carolina members of Congress seek to eradicate critical race theory from state universities, July 2021

<https://twitter.com/RepRalphNorman/status/1407080014139596804?s=20>

Oklahoma, the chilling effect of anti-critical race theory legislation, July 2021

<https://www.thefire.org/chilling-effect-remains-as-oklahomas-divisive-concepts-law-becomes-effective/>

The Penn State faculty has voted no confidence in the university's COVID policy: <https://www.centredaily.com/news/local/education/penn-state/article253466809.html>

The University of Iowa imposes a partial gag order on faculty's right to address masks in the classroom. See FAQ #3: <https://provost.uiowa.edu/fall-2021-faq-instructors>

Iowa revises its policy: <https://dailyiowan.com/2021/08/17/ui-walks-back-policy-barring-instructors-from-discussing-masks/>

Nebraska, chair of the state university board and candidate for governor proposes prohibition on critical race theory, July 2021

<https://academeblog.org/2021/07/23/notes-from-the-crt-front-in-nebraska/>

August: The Nebraska prohibition is voted down:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2021/08/13/nebraska-regents-shoot-down-anti-critical-race-theory-proposal#>

May 2021

Various:

<https://theintercept.com/2021/04/10/campus-reform-koch-young-americans-for-freedom-leadership-institute/>

[https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2021/03/23/former-professor-says-yale-fired-her-over-tweet-on-trump-dershowitz/?utm\\_source=iterable&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=campaign\\_2137990\\_nl\\_Daily-Briefing\\_date\\_20210324&cid=db&source=ams&sourceId=117228](https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2021/03/23/former-professor-says-yale-fired-her-over-tweet-on-trump-dershowitz/?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_2137990_nl_Daily-Briefing_date_20210324&cid=db&source=ams&sourceId=117228)

State legislators telling professors how to teach:

[https://americanindependent.com/florida-bill-allow-students-record-instructors-without-consent-universities-colleges-schools-professors-free-speech-cancel/?utm\\_content=buffer896b1&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://americanindependent.com/florida-bill-allow-students-record-instructors-without-consent-universities-colleges-schools-professors-free-speech-cancel/?utm_content=buffer896b1&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

<https://www.aaup.org/news/statement-opposes-florida-viewpoint-diversity-legislation#.YHWndOhKg2w>

<https://pocatellochubbuckobserver.com/2021/04/22/breaking-idaho-house-passes-bill-to-ban-teaching-of-critical-race-theory-in-state/>

[https://www.idahopress.com/eyeonboise/education-groups-issue-joint-statement-opposing-hb-377/article\\_3c170c49-38d0-5daf-ba2e-f5a189e12a7b.html](https://www.idahopress.com/eyeonboise/education-groups-issue-joint-statement-opposing-hb-377/article_3c170c49-38d0-5daf-ba2e-f5a189e12a7b.html)

[https://www.spokanepublicradio.org/post/idaho-house-votes-limit-teaching-critical-race-theory\\*stream/0;lw!!DZ3fjg!r9mp5yOowYqSQolkfYtVd8AcFi7ovKXdtLRTa8HWvqOXO!LPPIY6MDukPYD6XL5psQ\\$](https://www.spokanepublicradio.org/post/idaho-house-votes-limit-teaching-critical-race-theory*stream/0;lw!!DZ3fjg!r9mp5yOowYqSQolkfYtVd8AcFi7ovKXdtLRTa8HWvqOXO!LPPIY6MDukPYD6XL5psQ$)

AAUP investigations:

[https://www.aaup.org/article/state-profession-twin-crises ;!!DZ3fjg!ug5ijSZLOk9VyuAC1gVgkiCeW2F1sCpa-VGgp4vcaPfgEOzilStNH\\_gbHh200XNZaA\\$](https://www.aaup.org/article/state-profession-twin-crises)

<https://www.aaup.org/article/data-snapshot-whom-does-campus-reform-target-and-what-are-effects#.YJFUhJNKjer>

Zoom censorship:

<https://academeblog.org/2021/04/14/zoom-on-academic-freedom-in-higher-education/>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/04/19/zoom-addresses-academic-freedom-and-censorship-concerns#.YH2B9QDINTk.twitter>

April 2021

[https://urldefense.com/v3/ https://www.knoe.com/2021/04/06/la-lawmaker-files-bill-making-it-potentially-illegal-to-teach-about-racism-sexism-says-bill-promotes-equality-in-education-system/ ;!!DZ3fjg!udlTgH33ju2FLDSu8Fn3iZX1KB4A0VY8iWn7OkNyxNeGhcU3CxOlwyySuInOlgynQ\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.knoe.com/2021/04/06/la-lawmaker-files-bill-making-it-potentially-illegal-to-teach-about-racism-sexism-says-bill-promotes-equality-in-education-system/)

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/government/iowa-bill-banning-race-and-sex-scapegoating-expands-from-schools-universities-to-all-government-agencies-20210323>

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/03/18/boise-state-suspends-diversity-course-1300-students#>

<https://www.thefire.org/cancellation-of-52-diversity-classes-at-boise-state-as-lawmakers-seek-to-rein-in-social-justice/>

[https://urldefense.com/v3/ https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/545035-tennessee-gop-bill-would-ban-textbooks-with-lgbtq-content ;!!DZ3fjg!sEvXd1QAcIMpT\\_Zl-OuE\\_mVg8ObwxDAQfjEG7AoIoLLi9YS3uGrvHPyJpGkXdgMd3g\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/545035-tennessee-gop-bill-would-ban-textbooks-with-lgbtq-content)

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/when-academic-bullies-claim-the-mantle-of-free-speech>

<https://academeblog.org/2021/03/21/claiming-the-mantle-of-academic-freedom/>

<https://tmb.apaopen.org/pub/nonverbal-overload/release/1>

[https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2021/03/23/former-professor-says-yale-fired-her-over-tweet-on-trump-dershowitz/?utm\\_source=iterable&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=campaign\\_2137990\\_nl\\_Daily-Briefing\\_date\\_20210324&cid=db&source=ams&sourceid=117228](https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2021/03/23/former-professor-says-yale-fired-her-over-tweet-on-trump-dershowitz/?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=campaign_2137990_nl_Daily-Briefing_date_20210324&cid=db&source=ams&sourceid=117228)

March 2021

[https://littlevillagemag.com/letter-to-the-editor-top-10-ways-tenure-benefits-students-and-all-iowans/?link\\_id=10&can\\_id=8d0f86690a33dde7365409eb023f48a1&source=email-january-](https://littlevillagemag.com/letter-to-the-editor-top-10-ways-tenure-benefits-students-and-all-iowans/?link_id=10&can_id=8d0f86690a33dde7365409eb023f48a1&source=email-january-)

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<https://www.forbes.com/sites/evangerstmann/2021/02/22/should-universities-end-tenure/?sh=54cd6a4b3bd6>

<https://www.aaup.org/news/statement-iowa-legislatures-threats-academic-freedom-and-tenure>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-great-contraction>

February 2021

<https://www.ajc.com/education/ga-lawmakers-white-privilege-teaching-inquiry-sparks-anger-support/HCUEVLVXZFGFOXLYMALH3GG5M/>

<https://www.newsweek.com/georgia-educators-outraged-after-state-lawmaker-asked-if-theyre-teaching-about-white-privilege-1565420>