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AAUP

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Dear Colleagues,

I want to let you know that the Senate Education Committee a week ago Wednesday voted 5-4 not to pass our bill to place a faculty member on the Boards of Trustees out of their Committee to the full Senate for its consideration.

Yet while Wednesday's vote was not a victory, the hearing itself marks a real advance for us, due in good measure to the kind of support you have given this proposal. The university administrations that opposed our bill in Committee --- IU, Purdue, and Ball State --- had to ask some of their influential friends to spend an afternoon in the statehouse (Mr. Walda presented IU's opposition). While in the past administrators have been privately lobbying legislators against us, on Wednesday they had to present their arguments in public, and we're confident that we can rebut each and every point they made.

While they raised other points, the administration's main argument seemed to be that while they valued the work we faculty do, they believe that we cannot be trusted to participate in trustee deliberations in a way that would serve the overall best interests of the university community. Instead of aiming for what is best for the university as a whole, they told the Committee that we would pursue more narrow, selfish, faculty-centered goals.

Despite IU's high-profile lobbying efforts, we did come within a vote of winning. Too, you should know that one of the Committee members who had told us that that he was going to support our bill walked out of the committee room in the middle of the hearing with the Chairman of the Purdue Board of Trustees, and when he returned he apparently had a change of heart, and voted against us. Had he honored his original commitment, we obviously would have had a 5-4 vote in our favor.

You should also know that Senator Lubbers, who as Committee Chair cast the last and deciding vote, voted against us. Senator Miller, due I think to the support you gave her, told us that she supports our bill, yet she was not able to attend the hearing. Had she been there, we would have at least had a tie vote.

Moreover, we continue to attract more faculty support with each passing year. One of the reasons we even got a hearing on Wednesday --- in the last two years the Senate has refused to hear this bill --- is because people like you took the time to contact key legislators. We continue to pick up support in other areas of higher education --- Art Hansen, for instance, a former Purdue president, urged Senator Lubbers to vote for our bill. And the Muncie newspaper, the "Muncie Star", ran a lead editorial in its Wednesday edition, urging the legislature to pass our bill.

You should also know that our bill's Senate sponsor, Senator Murry Clark, did a wonderful job presenting our case to the committee. All of the faculty who attended the hearing --- and most of our universities were represented by faculty, including IUPUI --- were energized by his passionate and thoughtful arguments. Like Senators Lubbers and Miller, Senator Clark is a Republican whose district includes parts of Indianapolis, and we're fortunate to have such an able and influential faculty friend.

And don't forget that our bill has for two years in a row passed out of the House with large, bipartisan support, receiving about 85 out of a possible 100 votes.

So the good news is that we are close. We continue to pick up support among the media and in other influential circles. The AAUP is raising the faculty's profile in the Statehouse, and we're increasingly recognized as a valuable resource in shaping higher education policy. None of these advances would have been possible without the time and effort you have given, and I want to thank you all for your work.

It would be a help if you can send a short "thank you" to Senator Clark for his efforts. You can email him at S29@ai.org

It would also be useful to share your disappointment with Senator Lubbers' vote. You can email her at #S30@ai.org

We've assured our statehouse supporters, and those who voted against us, that faculty aren't going to fold up our tents and walk away. We're convinced that faculty are one of the state's most valuable higher education resources, and we're determined to find ways to add our voices to those that make higher education policy.

Feel free to email me if you have any questions or reactions to any of this, and thank you again for your good work.

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