



4 April 2024

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Keeping Track of All These Laws

The Legislature has inflicted so many laws on us recently that they can all blur together. So here is a recap.

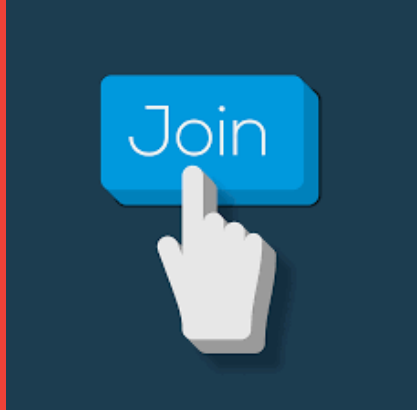
- **Laws Affecting Your Job.** What you can teach, and how you can teach it - and about keeping your job...
- **Laws Affecting University Administration.** From presidential searches to DEI.
- **Laws Affecting the Union.** All about red tape.

As noted in the [31 March 2024 Extra](#), there are all sorts of legal problems with these laws, but litigation takes a long time. And while we figure out how to deal with these laws, this summer the Legislature is beginning to plan for its next session.

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow Friday on USF St.

Petersburg. The USF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida will meet tomorrow, Friday, April 5th at 12 pm, in the University Student Center's Ocean Room (USC 262), and on Zoom. On [the agenda](#): counting the ballots cast in the chapter election, the [AAUP Day of Action to stand for democracy and the system of higher education that sustains it](#), certification update, the membership campaign, litigation update, and more. And here are [the minutes from the last meeting](#).

All UFF USF employees - members and non-members alike - are invited to attend. But to Zoom in you must have an invitation: contact [the Chapter Secretary](#) to get one. Meetings and events are [posted on the Events Calendar](#) of the [UFF USF Website](#). Come and check us out.



Union Membership

If you are not a union member, please [join today](#) (the form connects automatically to the eDues form, so you will want to have your banking information or checkbook information handy). We are stronger standing together in solidarity.



Bargaining the Next Contract

We are *supposed* to have a new contract on August 7, and the current contract says that bargaining should start in April. Our Bargaining Committee is

preparing for bargaining and wants ideas, comments, suggestions, and desiderata from the employees that the union represents (especially, to be honest, from members). Please send thoughts on bargaining to [the Chapter Secretary](#).

The [2018 Legislative Session](#) was weird. Very little legislation addressed real issues, but the Legislature did force USF to consolidate, require that K-12 teacher unions maintain 50% membership density to remain certified, and cut instructional funding. In some ways, it was the beginning. But for some reason - perhaps the pandemic - the real onslaught began in 2021.





Laws Affecting You

In 2021, the Legislature passed [House Bill 233 / Senate Bill 264](#) requiring annual diversity surveys, permitting students to record teachers' lectures (to get evidence of bias), and barring prohibiting the state boards "from shielding certain students, faculty, or staff from certain speech." After an initial embarrassment, the annual surveys seem to have disappeared, and as for shielding, it appears to depend on what "certain" means.

Then in 2022, K-12 education was hit by the [Don't Say Gay](#) law (which was [recently adjusted](#)). Meanwhile, for higher education, three bills against critical race theory died while a fourth, the notorious [House Bill 7](#), survived; the bill did not mention "critical race theory" explicitly, so it was difficult to tell what it was banning. This was the first law that made it tricky to talk about racial or sexual discrimination; both [UFF](#) and [USF](#) have posted pages about classroom instruction and HB 7, and meanwhile, the litigation grinds on. And [Senate Bill 7044](#) mandated post tenure review.

In 2023, the [Biweekly](#) [asked](#) if politics was local anymore, or if it was driven by wedge issues. And the [Biweekly](#) also reported that some legislators seemed to be passing these laws out of fear. One of these was [Senate Bill 266](#), a legislative train that, among other things, barred the the final step in the unions' grievance process - binding arbitration - for dismissals. This is a critical problem as grievances are the primary tool for contract enforcement. And speaking of dismissals, Senate Bill 266 doubled down on post tenure review.

This year, the Legislature was distracted by ... real problems ... and had less time to kick us around. A [bill to bar woke stuff](#) in teacher training died, but not much else to report.

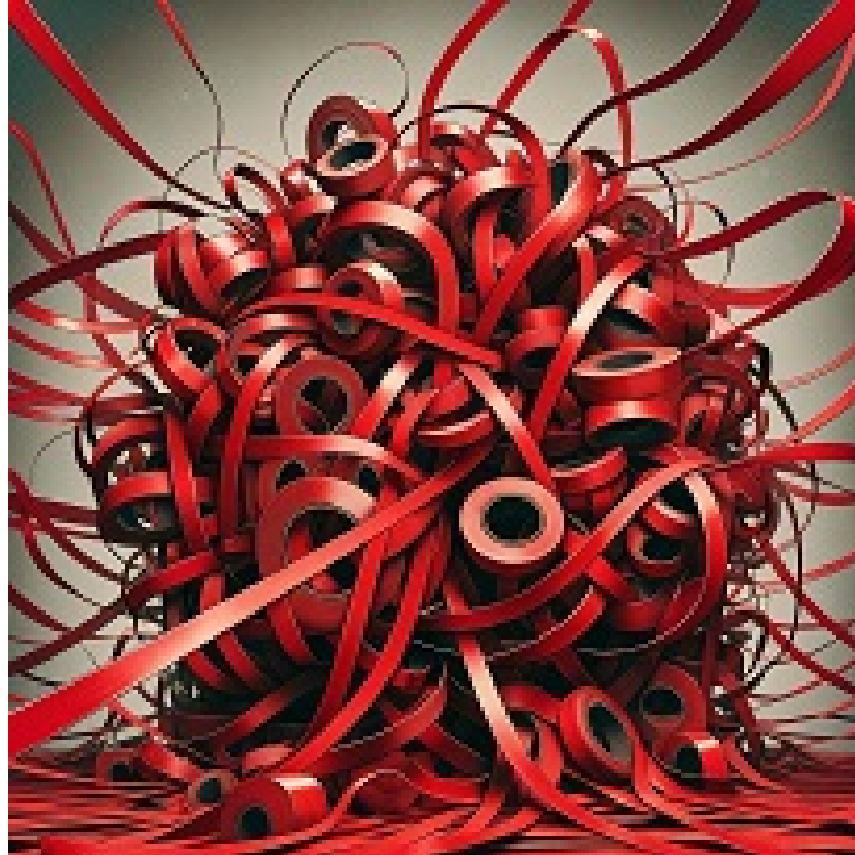


Laws Affecting University Administration

In 2021, the Legislature failed to pass [a bill](#) to mostly close university presidential searches, but if at first you don't succeed ... [a bill](#) to mostly close university presidential searches passed in 2022.

Then in 2022, [Senate Bill 7044](#) required that each university change its accreditor during each accreditation cycle (this after several Florida universities got in trouble with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for innovations mandated by the Legislature).

Then in 2023, [Senate Bill 266](#) barred expenditures for any diversity / equity / inclusion stuff.



Laws Affecting the Union

For over a decade, it was a tradition: almost every year there appeared a bill requiring that a majority of the employees represented by a public employees union be dues-paying members in order for the union to be certified, i.e., empowered to bargain and enforce a contract. Disgruntled employees could always force a certification election to decertify a union, but that was not enough for anti-union legislators. In fact, in 2021, two such bills died, along with a bill that meddled with the union's membership form.

But in 2023, [Senate Bill 256](#) finally passed, requiring that 60% of represented employees be dues-paying members. It also barred dues payment by paycheck deduction, thus foisting a lot of paperwork on the unions and a lot of inconvenience on the employees. Interestingly, a handful of unions beloved by the legislative leadership are exempt.

In the past few years, a cadre of legislators - with the support of the governor - put a lot of time and effort to go after college and university faculty, administrations, and unions. The administrations are keeping their heads low, so it is up to us to put a stop to this. [Join today](#), and contact the [Chapter Secretary](#) about joining the union's Government Relations Committee.



Join the Movement

Organizing is critical for the union to carry out its legal mission to represent the employees in its bargaining unit. Members, and in particular activists, provide unions with the resources they need. Dues are nice, but helping hands are nicer. With broad base of activists, the union leadership has a better idea of the needs, desires, and aspirations of the employees that it represents. And a broad base of activists also provides wider expertise and points of view when decisions are made.

Union participation is good for activists, too, especially in a research university. The current reward structure - achieving student evaluation median M for Student Evaluation Question #8 and / or getting X publications in Y-rated journals to generate impact factor Z - encourages faculty to retreat into their plastic bubbles. *Union participation means interacting with all sorts of people from all sorts of academic disciplines.*

The **Membership Committee** needs activists who want to talk to other faculty and professionals. The **Publicity Committee** needs activists to spread the word. The **Grievance Committee** needs activists who want to help colleagues in trouble. And we even need activists willing to take leadership roles. If you are interested or intrigued, please contact the [Chapter Secretary](#).

Grievances

If you have been the victim of a violation of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#), you have **thirty days from the time you**

knew or should have known of the violation to file a grievance. If you are, and at the time of the violation were, a dues-paying member of the United Faculty of Florida, you have the right to union representation. To contact the UFF USF Grievance Committee, go to the [Grievances Page](#).

Don't forget: UFF can only represent an employee in a grievance if that employee was a member at the time of the contract violation. *And as of the end of last October, the FEA does not want its lawyers to assist any UFF members who are not on eDues, so if you are a UFF member but did not switch to eDues, that should be fixed TODAY.* And don't forget that if there is a contract violation, the grievance must be filed within thirty days.



Follow us on Social Media &&& *Join us on Social Media*

We have a Facebook group: see [United Faculty of Florida at USF](#). This page is a place where UFF members can exchange thoughts and ideas. **The page is "public", but only dues-paying UFF members are eligible to post items on the page. If you are a UFF member, ask to join on the page, and the moderator will invite every UFF member that asks to join.** Non-members are welcome to look (but you need a Facebook account to do that). So check us out ... join the conversation.

- We have a blog: see [The USF Faculty Blog](#). This has news items as they come up.
- We are on Twitter (aka X), so follow us on Twitter / X via [@UffUsf](#).
- We even have a You-Tube channel: [check out our videos](#)

We are revamping our publicity machine, and if you are interested in social media, in membership, or in conversations with you colleagues across campus, come

join the campaign. Contact [the Communications Committee chair](#).

USF United Support Fund for Food Pantries

Many of our students are struggling during with food insecurity, and the USF Foundation is supporting the [USF Food Pantries](#) to help out. They are accepting non-perishable donations, but one can also make monetary donations for the pantries at all three campuses.

Details, Details

The USF-UFF Chapter website is <http://www.uff.ourusf.org>, and our e-mail address is uff@ourusf.org. About this broadcast: This Newsletter was broadcast from Constant Contact, and is intended for all members of the UFF USF Bargaining unit (USF faculty and professionals at most departments). A (usually identical) version will be broadcast to USF-News and USF-Talk from mccolm@usf.edu.

If you do not want to receive the UFF Biweekly, you can unsubscribe below or contacting [the Chapter Secretary](#). If you do not receive the Biweekly, but want to, contact [the Chapter Secretary](#).

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