

Resolution Regarding the Protection of Ombudsmen from Disclosure

WHEREAS the University of North Texas provides faculty with the services of an ombudsperson, and

WHEREAS an ombudsman is “an independent, neutral third party who assists in resolving problems, concerns, and complaints,” and

WHEREAS the duties of an ombudsman include mediation, providing counsel and information, and opening avenues of communication between people, and

WHEREAS the faculty, staff, and students of the University of North Texas are more likely to utilize the important services of an ombuds office when they are confident that communications with that office will be confidential and privileged, and

WHEREAS HB 3578, authored by State Representatives Patrick Rose and Eddie Rodriguez, states that oral and written communications between the ombudsman and faculty are confidential, privileged, and not subject to discovery and may not be used as evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding, and

WHEREAS the passing of HB 3578 will allow the ombuds office at the University of North Texas to perform its job better, and

WHEREAS the passing of HB 3578 will also help protect all parties involved in a conflict by ensuring confidentiality,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of the University of North Texas calls upon the Texas Legislature to pass HB 3578 during this 80th regular session of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Speaker of the House Tom Craddick, Representative Rose, Representative Rodriguez, and all members of the Civil Practices Committee.