

# Florida Teachers Union Files Suit to Protect University Faculty Rights

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Three unions that represent faculty at Florida universities filed a lawsuit in federal court today challenging Florida Senate Bill 266, which gives politically appointed university presidents final decision-making authority over discipline, termination and other personnel matters relating to Florida university faculty. The bill bans independent arbitration by a neutral third party, depriving faculty of meaningful review designed to protect academic freedom and employment rights.

The unions include the United Faculty of Florida (UFF), an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and UFF's Florida State University (UFF-FSU) and University of Florida (UFF-UF) chapters. They are represented by Selendy Gay, which filed the suit in the Northern District of Florida against members of the boards of trustees of Florida State University and the University of Florida and the statewide board of trustees that is responsible for overseeing Florida's state university system. The complaint alleges that the arbitration ban is a politicized attempt to stifle Florida faculty members' academic freedom and violates the Federal Arbitration Act (FAA), a well-established law enacted in 1925 that safeguards the right to arbitration nationwide.

"SB 266 attacks independent review designed to protect Florida's university system from politicized and arbitrary decisions that threaten academic freedom and fairness," said Selendy Gay special counsel Corey Stoughton. "This legal action signals the AFT and UFF's refusal to stand by as the state Legislature and governor whittle down the employment protections of Florida unions and their members."

This is UFF's second challenge to SB 266's arbitration ban. Its [first suit](#), which is ongoing in state court, seeks to prevent New College and its politically appointed leadership from enforcing the ban on the grounds that it violates Florida's state constitutional right to collectively bargain and unlawfully reneges on valid contractual promises made by the state when it signed collective bargaining agreements. On June 21, that suit was [allowed to move forward](#) by Judge J. Lee Marsh of the 2nd Judicial Circuit of Florida, who rejected the state's motion to dismiss the case.

The UFF is an affiliate of the AFT, a national union of education professionals that champions fairness, democracy, economic opportunity and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for students, families and communities.

## **Attorneys**

- Faith Gay
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## **Practice**

- Public Interest and Pro Bono