

Date of Hearing: April 19, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 2302 (Harper) – As Introduced February 18, 2016

SUBJECT: University of California: labor institute.

SUMMARY: Urges the University of California (UC) Regents to refrain from forming a labor institute at UC Irvine.

EXISTING LAW: Provides that the UC shall constitute a public trust, to be administered by the existing corporation known as UC Regents, with full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary, as specified (California Constitution Article IX, Section 9).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS: *Background.* The UC Institute for Labor and Employment (ILE) was a multi-campus research program devoted to studying, and finding solutions for, problems of labor and employment in the state and nation. The ILE expanded upon the existing Institutes of Industrial Relations (IIRs) at UC Berkeley and UCLA, which were founded in 1945, and upon the two Centers for Labor Research and Education (CLREs) housed in the IIRs on the campuses of UC Berkeley and UCLA. From 2000-2003 the ILE supported a wide range of research, teaching, and community service activities.

The ILE was restructured in 2004 in order to reduce costs and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its research initiatives. The UC systemwide grants and research program, formerly administered by ILE has been replaced by a Labor and Employment Research Fund, which is administered by the Office of Research within the UC Office of the President. The Fund is overseen by a faculty steering committee comprised of faculty from all 10 UC campuses. An advisory board to the two IIR directors provides input on priority research areas. The advisory board is comprised of a faculty member from each of six UC campuses, the two CLRE directors, and two members of the labor community. Final decisions regarding research funding are made by the faculty steering committee of the Fund.

The UC Berkeley Institute of Industrial Relations and the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations continue to conduct and fund research, teaching, and service activities on issues of importance to working people, employers, and the state.

Need for this measure. According to the author, "In 2016, the University of California will receive millions of dollars in additional funding to create a new labor institute at UC Irvine." The author argues that, "while legitimate think tanks do not engage in partisan politics, unions have every right to do so, of course, and may even call their institute a think tank. But the unions themselves, not California taxpayers, should pay the bills."

Creation of a third institute? The author contends that the UC will create a third UC IIR, but according to the UC Office of the President, there is no pending plan to be presented to the Regents, who are the sole authority in the approval of additional IIRs, for the funding or creation of an IIR at UC Irvine, or any other UC campus.

Alternative approach. It is unclear why this measure is necessary. If the author is concerned that the reports that have been produced by the existing UC IIRs have not been researched and written without bias, the author may wish to consider not pursuing this measure, and instead, work with the existing UC IIRs in determining various approaches to conducting their research and writing their reports.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Associated Builders and Contractors of California
Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association
Western Electrical Contractors Association

Opposition

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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