



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
LYLE LARSON

DISTRICT 122

October 30, 2013

The Honorable Rick Perry
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry:

In light of recent meetings of the House Select Committee on Transparency in State Agency Operations regarding the conduct of University of Texas System Regent Wallace Hall, I would like to highlight some of the testimony presented and ultimately propose a simple solution to end this expensive and embarrassing process.

As you know, several of the witnesses who were called to testify before our committee last week provided information that exacerbates concerns about Regent Hall's recent actions.

Barry Burgdorf, the UT System's former vice chancellor and general counsel, told the committee that he was pressured to resign from his position by various regents for failing to sufficiently criticize UT President Bill Powers in a report about a UT Law School faculty loan program. The most impactful part of his testimony came when Mr. Burgdorf stated, "I think there is a clear intent to get rid of Bill Powers."

Kevin Hegarty, UT Austin's vice president and chief financial officer, testified that he was pressured to expedite responses to Wallace Hall's open records requests, resulting in the lack of protection of confidential data. Carol Longoria, UT Austin's open records coordinator, claimed she feared that she was assisting the university in breaking laws by releasing confidential information when responding to open records requests from Wallace Hall.

With Board Chairman Paul Foster's recent announcement that he intends to amend the policy governing the regents' ability to seek public information, the Board of Regents is taking a step in the right direction. While this is welcome news, if Wallace Hall continues to behave as he has over the last several months, this policy will not be effective.

The clear solution is to ask Wallace Hall to resign From the UT System Board of Regents. The UT System endowment holds over \$20 billion in assets. The institution is one of Texas's world-renowned tier one research institutions. This embarrassing distraction hurts not only the university system's ability to continue to grow, but also impedes recruitment of faculty into their academic centers of excellence.

I am confident that, as Texas Aggies, we would both be incensed if a Texas A&M System regent was harassing the president at our flagship institution in College Station with frivolous open record requests returning over 800,000 documents.

Wallace Hall's business acumen and commitment to public service are essential, but the current situation has become untenable. His talents may be better used in another capacity in your administration, if you see fit to ask him to step aside.

Governor Perry, neither of us may agree with everything Bill Powers has done as President of UT Austin, but watching Wallace Hall conduct a Salem-esque tribunal of Bill Powers is unprofessional, undignified, and unbecoming of a gubernatorial appointed regent. We may not have agreed philosophically on certain things in the past, but I strongly believe your outstanding legacy as our Governor is threatened by this series of events at the only constitutionally-established university system in our state's original constitution.

I truly believe that Wallace Hall's resignation is the best way to move forward. Thank you for your consideration.

Gig 'em,



Lyle