

## **Resolution to Establish a Mutual Defense Compact for the Universities of the Big Ten Academic Alliance in Defense of Academic Freedom, Institutional Integrity, and the Research Enterprise**

**Whereas**, recent and escalating politically motivated actions by governmental bodies pose a significant threat to the foundational principles of American higher education, including the autonomy of university governance, the integrity of scientific research, and the protection of free speech;

**Whereas**, the Trump administration and aligned political actors have signaled a willingness to target individual institutions with legal, financial, and political incursion designed to undermine their public mission, silence dissenting voices, and/or exert improper control over academic inquiry;

**Whereas**, the Big Ten Academic Alliance represents not only athletic competition but also a longstanding tradition of academic collaboration, research excellence, and commitment to democratic values and shared governance;

**Whereas**, the Big Ten Academic Alliance includes 18 universities with thousands of instructors serving over 600,000 students;

**Whereas**, the preservation of one institution's integrity is the concern of all, and an infringement against one member university of the Big Ten shall be considered an infringement against all;

**Be it resolved that**, the Rutgers University Senate urges the President of Rutgers University to formally propose and help establish a Mutual Academic Defense Compact (MADC) among all members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance;

**Be it further resolved that**, under this compact, all participating institutions shall commit meaningful funding to a shared or distributed defense fund. This fund shall be used to provide immediate and strategic support to any member institution under direct political or legal infringement;

**Be it further resolved that**, participating institutions shall make available, at the request of the institution under direct political infringement, the services of their legal counsel, governance experts, and public affairs offices to coordinate a unified and vigorous response, including but not limited to: Legal representation and countersuit actions; strategic public communication; amicus briefs and expert testimony; legislative advocacy and coalition-building; related topical research as needed.

**Be it finally resolved that**, this resolution be transmitted to the leadership of all Big Ten universities and their respective governing boards and shared governance bodies, and that the President of Rutgers University take a leading role in convening a summit of Big Ten academic and legal leadership to initiate the implementation of this Compact.