



Student Government

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Student Senate

Legislative Session of 6 April 2021

S.S.B. 17

Sponsor: Senator Richards & Senator Pancholi

Student Senate Action: Passed/Failed/Tabled

An Act

Relating to the creation of a Jewish Constituency Senator.

Section 1. Short Title

This bill may be titled as, “Creation of Jewish Constituency Senator.”

Section 2. Discussion

Whereas, the operational definition of an undergraduate Jewish student at the University of Iowa is a student who may be actively practicing, or have familial, cultural, or ethnic ties to the Jewish faith; and,

Whereas, the Jewish identity is a ‘personhood,’ merging both ethnic and religious ties as one never “stops” being Jewish, resulting in the resurgence of identity participation by college age members of the community whose families have lost ties to the community as a result of the historical discrimination of the identity, to include be not limited to, the Holocaust; and,

Whereas, the functional definition of anti-Semitism, as it pertains to this document, will be provided by the '*Working Definition of Anti-Semitism*' provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, refer to appendix A; and,

Whereas, students identifying as Jewish have experienced a multitude of anti-Semitic events including, anti-Semitic rhetoric and vandalism on campus and the failure to condemn these

events by staff and faculty, examples including the vandalization of the Hillel House during a Shabbat dinner, the presence of Neo-Nazi members protesting the Jewish identity's right to exist, and the prevalence of Swastika-centric graffiti on campus property; and,

Whereas, students who associate with the Jewish identity, both ethnically and religiously, are afraid to identify as Jewish for fear that it will make them vulnerable to anti-Semitism and further struggles to relate to their peers, compiled by a general lack of knowledge or understanding of the anti-discrimination resources available to them; and,

Whereas, alumni of the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana are currently engaged in a Title IV, class action lawsuit against the university for allegedly failing to take strong enough action against anti-Semitic discrimination, thusly, supporting anti-Semitic discrimination, this position could serve as a preventative measure, minimalizing potential losses incurred by the University of Iowa; and,

Whereas, anti-Semitic rhetoric follows a larger anti-immigration agenda, and the University of Iowa has a large international student population; the majority of anti-Semitic incidents have been perpetrated against synagogues that help immigrants, including vandalization of the Church of the Nazarene in Iowa City, a direct condemnation of the Jewish community's ties to the greater immigrant community; ignoring this larger agenda and its implications for the University of Iowa community will be a tacit encouragement of the rampant discrimination and hate both communities have and continue to face; and,

Whereas, the University of Iowa and its governing bodies, including the Undergraduate Student Government, and its subsequent positions are considered to be secular in nature; and,

Whereas, it is the duty of the Undergraduate Student Government to support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts on our campus due to the intrinsic values these tenants provide to our campus, our community and our individual growth and understanding, broader representation for Jewish students on campus could result in a liaison between the Jewish community on campus and larger campus governing bodies.

Section 3. Action

USG will make the following amendments to its current bylaws which take effect for the 2021-2022 Legislative Election Cycle, with modifications highlighted in yellow:

Article II, Section A. Composition

1. The Student Senate shall be composed of 50 senators.
2. Thirty-five senators shall be elected according to the procedure in the Election Code.

3. Ten senators shall be elected or appointed by the following constituencies with each constituency selecting one senator to serve on its behalf:

b. The following six constituency senators will be elected in the spring election period through a USG-administered elections process according to procedure in the Elections Code.

1. Asian Pacific Islander Desi American
2. Black
3. Latinx
4. LGBTQ+
5. Disability
6. First-Generation

The remaining four constituency senators will be selected through an internal appointment or election process of the respective student organization in parentheses.

- Native American (Native American Student Association)
- Veteran (University of Iowa Veterans Association)
- Jewish (Hillel of the University of Iowa)
- International (International Student Advisory Board)

Therefore Be It Resolved, the University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government recognizes core issues with the Constituency Senator system as it exists and commits to reconsidering the function and structure of said positions

Section 4. Appendix A

[Working Definition of Anti-Semitism' provided by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance](#)

Section 4. Enactment Clause

Therefore, be it enacted by the University of Iowa Undergraduate Student Government upon the signature of the President.

_____, **Speaker of the Senate**

Sam Stucky

I hereby attest and certify that this resolution originated from the 2020-2021 Student Senate Session.

_____, **Secretary**

Airiana Mohr

APPROVED on _____

_____, **USG President**

Connor Wooff