

**Bill 003**

**A Bill to Clarify the Rules and Procedures for Write-In Candidates**

**Sponsored by: Senator Sijgers**

**Co-Sponsored by: Senator Lucardi, Senator Kilgore, Senator Paviglianiti,  
Senator Bracey, Senator Schlee**

***Whereas,***

Currently, there are no clarifications for the procedure regarding write-in candidates in a Senatorial election.

***Whereas,***

In past elections, the Executives and Boards of Elections have chosen at their own discretion whether to accept a write-in candidate as a serious candidate or intentional vote.

***Whereas,***

There are often Senate seats that do not receive a candidate, resulting in a write-in candidate or a vacancy.

***Whereas,***

Not having a clear set of procedures has left the Student Government Association open to complaints about a lack of transparency and accountability in our elections.

***Whereas,***

In order to prevent continued confusion over the procedures for write-in candidates, the Senate should add a set of procedures to the Senate by-laws.

***Whereas,***

In the past votes for write-in candidates were disqualified because of the use of a candidate's nickname or preferred name rather than their full legal name.

***Whereas,***

This level of specificity is unneeded and puts a high burden on students and candidates to ensure that all voters know their legal name rather than the name that voters are most familiar with and by which candidates are known on campus and in their courses.

***Whereas,***

There has never been a clear clarification on the rules regarding the misspelling of a write-in candidate's name and the current precedent has allowed for the disqualification of votes that were clearly intended for a known write-in campaign.

***Whereas,***

The below procedures clarify the process the Board of Elections and the Executive should follow in the case of a write-in candidate.

***Be it enacted that,***

The Student Government Association Senate, acting in its official capacity as the representative of the undergraduate student body of The Catholic University of America, hereby add the following clarifications to Article VII, Section 5 of the Senate Bylaws and amend them to read:

Article VII, Section 5: "Election Definitions and Procedures"

Clause 1 The Following are established clarifications and procedures:

(ii) Write-in candidate definition and procedures:

(a.) write-in candidate: a student that is a member of the class or academic school that has received at least one (1) vote for the position.

(b.) To be classified as the winner of an election a write-in candidate must have received the most votes, meet the qualifications outlined in the Student Government Association Constitution, as well as be approved by the Dean of Students.

(c.) If a write-in candidate received the most votes for the position they must be notified by the Executive and Board of Elections of their election within 24 hours.

(d.) The Executive and Board of Elections upon informing the write-in candidate of their election must formally ask the write-in candidate if they are willing to take the oath of office and represent their constituency. If they answer in the affirmative, the candidate becomes a Senator-elect and an announcement can be sent to the University Community. If in the negative, the Executive and Board of Elections must follow the Senate Vacancy procedures.

(e.) A write-in candidate's name may be written with either their full name or the name they have entered as their preferred name on University paperwork. If a write-in candidate goes by an alternate name, they may submit the spelling of their legal and preferred name to the Board of Elections as names to be officially accepted as a vote in their favor up to two (2) hours prior to the close of voting.

(d.) If the name of the write-in candidate is misspelled, it is the responsibility and at the discretion of the Board of Elections to determine whether the misspelling is a clear sign of intentionality to vote for the candidate, or unclear to the point where the Board of Elections cannot easily deduce which Catholic University student was to receive the vote.

Agreed to by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_ yeas to \_\_\_\_\_ nays on this date: \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ abstaining and \_\_\_\_\_ not present.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gerald Sharpe  
*President of the Student Government Association*

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Gemma del Carmen  
*Vice President of the Student Government Association*