

Bill 11-005

A Bill to Enact Freedom of Deliberation in SGA Senate Meetings

Sponsored by: Senator Hermes

Co-Sponsored by: Senator Vanraes, Senator Colquitt

Whereas,

The Senate relies on candid, respectful, and honest deliberation in order to govern effectively on behalf of the undergraduate student body.

Whereas,

Official minutes serve as the permanent and authoritative account of the actions, motions, and remarks made in Senate proceedings, and thus continue to provide clear and attributable documentation of what was said and done during meetings.

Whereas,

The Catholic University of America's Recording Policy states that "Recording ... organizational meetings at Catholic University with any recording device (including but not limited to a cellular telephone, PDA, digital recording device, digital camera, etc.) is prohibited unless all parties to the conversation or meeting give their consent in advance."¹

Whereas,

Senators, guests, and members of the audience may occasionally hesitate to speak frankly on sensitive topics for fear of having their statements repeatedly misquoted and taken out of context.

Whereas,

Significant research on deliberative democracy – from the National Institutes of Health, The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Oxford University – have indicated that when participants feel secure to engage openly, consider opposing viewpoints, and revise their positions without fear of reprisal or misrepresentation, the quality of decision-making improves.²

Whereas,

The SGA Constitution ensures transparency through public meetings, recorded votes, and published minutes.

Whereas,

The Senate, as a deliberative body, possesses the authority to set reasonable rules of procedure and conditions of attendance for those present at its meetings.

Be it enacted that,

The Student Government Association, acting in its official capacity as the representative of the undergraduate student body of The Catholic University of America, hereby establishes the following provisions governing all meetings of the SGA Senate:

¹ [CUA Recording Policy](#)

² [Source #1 \(American Academy of Arts and Sciences\)](#) [Source #2 \(NIH\)](#) [Source #3 \(Oxford\)](#)

- All Senate Meetings shall remain open to members of the University community in the interest of transparency and public engagement, and shall be closed to individuals who are not affiliated with The Catholic University of America.
- No Senate Meeting may be audio-recorded or video-recorded by any individual, unless expressly consented to by everyone in the chamber and audience.
- Attendees, Senators, and all participants are free to discuss the general subject matter and information presented in Senate Meetings, but no individual may publicly publish, quote, or attribute any statement, position, or remark to a specific Senator, attendee, or member of the University community without that individual's explicit consent.

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

Michael Kish
President of the Student Government Association

Matthew Moskowski
Vice President of the Student Government Association