

Resolution 11-012
A Resolution to Affirm SGA’s Right to Freedom of Deliberation
Sponsored by: Senator Hermes
Co-Sponsored by: Senator Bert, Senator Vanraes, Senator Colquitt

Whereas,

The Catholic University Recording Policy prohibits recording “organizational meetings at Catholic University” without the advance consent of all participants, and SGA Senate meetings are organizational meetings of a University-recognized student organization.¹

Whereas,

The policy’s stated purpose is to prevent a chilling effect on open discussion, protect deliberative processes, and avoid an atmosphere of distrust, all of which are essential to the functioning of a representative legislative body.²

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.³

Whereas,

Mandatory or unrestricted recordings of Senate meetings discourage candid debate, reduce participation from newer Senators, politicize internal deliberations, and expose student representatives to unnecessary risk of harassment or misrepresentation.

Whereas,

The Recording Policy’s exception for “town halls, conferences, or other public events hosted by the University or event sponsors” does not apply to SGA Senate meetings, which are organizational meetings and not University-hosted public events.

Whereas,

Even if the Recording Policy were misinterpreted not to apply, the Student Code of Conduct empowers student officials—including members and officers of the SGA Senate—to issue reasonable directives in the performance of their duties, including directives prohibiting recording in order to maintain an orderly and secure deliberative environment.

Whereas,

The ability of student legislators to debate freely, without fear of unauthorized recording, is essential to fulfilling the Senate’s mandate to represent the undergraduate student body faithfully and effectively.

¹ [CUA Recording Policy](#)

² *ibid.*

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

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.

Be it resolved that,

The Student Government Association Senate, acting in its official capacity as the representative legislative body of the undergraduate students of The Catholic University of America, hereby

- Affirms its authority to prohibit the recording of Senate meetings without the unanimous advance consent of all participants, in accordance with the University Recording Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Requests that the University Administration formally recognize and support the Senate's right to conduct unrecorded deliberative meetings, consistent with University policy and the protection of healthy democratic governance within the student body.

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