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SB92-14/15: Resolution Regarding Election Bylaws

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The Associated Students of the University of Montana
Resolution Regarding Election Bylaws
May 6, 2015
SB92-14/15
Authored by: Caleb Chestnut, ASUM Senator; Chase Ellinger, ASUM Senator
Sponsored by:

Whereas, the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM) supports and advocates for students;

Whereas, ASUM’s spring elections feature contested races;

Whereas, in the midst of such races, ASUM seeks to maintain the integrity of its elections process;

Whereas, Article V, Section 3, Subsection N of the ASUM Bylaws reads:

“Any candidate who accepts a contribution in kind, or solicits such a contribution shall be subject to sanctions up to and including disqualification. Any campaign undertaken on behalf of a candidate or group of candidates by any third party shall be considered a contribution in kind, and is prohibited. Such campaign activity includes, but is not limited to, flyers, posters, banners or paid web material bearing a candidate’s name or image; newspaper advertisements and editorials; or speeches made on behalf of a candidate or group of candidates.”

Whereas, the solicitation and/or receiving of endorsements is intended to give candidates an edge in these competitive races;

Whereas, during the 2015 ASUM elections, candidates were endorsed by a range of non-ASUM-recognized groups, such as academic departments, fraternities, and private companies;

Whereas, off-campus organizations who endorse candidates are typically most conscious of their own interests, not those of students;

Whereas, department endorsements represent the interests of faculty and staff, not necessarily students, and their endorsements may give the impression of conflicts of interest;

Whereas, fraternities and sororities have immense influence on the UM campus but do not operate under the auspices of ASUM;

Whereas, endorsements by fraternities and sororities may give candidates an unfair advantage to candidates contesting ASUM elections;

Therefore, Let It Be Resolved, that the ASUM Bylaws, Article V, Section 3, Subsection N be amended to read:
“Any candidate who accepts a contribution in kind, or solicits such a contribution shall be subject to sanctions up to and including disqualification. Candidates may only receive endorsements for their campaigns from individual ASUM activity fee-paying UM students. Candidates are prohibited from accepting or soliciting endorsements from third-party organizations, including but not limited to, ASUM student groups, fraternities and sororities, academic departments, UM sports teams, non-profit organizations, and private companies. Any campaign undertaken on behalf of a candidate or group of candidates by any party shall be considered a contribution in kind, and is prohibited. Such campaign activity includes, but is not limited to, flyers, posters, banners or paid web material bearing a candidate's name or image; newspaper advertisements and editorials; or speeches made on behalf of a candidate or group of candidates.”

Passed by Committee:

Passed by ASUM Senate: ____________________________, 2015

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Sarah Smith,  Sean McQuillan,
Chair of Relations & Affairs  Chair of the Senate