The Student Senate
68th Session
Texas A&M University

Introduced By: Aubre Dean, Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate
                Senator Jackson Kuplack, Liberal Arts Caucus

Sponsored By: Chair Joseph Hood, Finance Committee
                  Vice President Jacob Arnett, Legislative Relations
                  Senator Chandler Smith, COALS Caucus
                  Senator Kasey Khoobiar, Liberal Arts Caucus
                  Senator Abby Hutton, Off Campus Caucus
                  Senator Shara McDonald, Off Campus Caucus
                  Senator Jeremy Peel, Off Campus Caucus
                  Senator Ryan Simpson, Off Campus Caucus
                  Senator Annie Flowers, Freshmen Caucus
                  Senator Molly Gilliland, Freshmen Caucus
                  Senator Alex Rose, Corps of Cadets Caucus
                  Senator W Lander, Corps of Cadets Caucus
                  Senator Elizabeth Schaller, Liberal Arts Caucus
                  Senator Ja'Cory Clark, On Campus Caucus

Action Taken:  PASSED

Certified By: Aaron Mitchell
              Speaker of the Senate

Duly Approved: Joseph Benigno
               Student Body President

The Sexual Assault and Harassment Victims Protection Bill

"A bill in opposition of H.R.3403 - Safe Campus Act of 2015, and the harmful effects it would have on the students of Texas A&M University."

S.B. 68-28
Whereas(1): On September 22, 2015, Texas A&M University announced a campaign called “Step In. Stand Up.” An organization founded in order to combat sexual assault at Texas A&M University, as well as calling on students to be at the forefront in addressing sexual assault and harassment on campus; and,

Whereas(2): H.R. 3403 would negatively change the process Universities must take in the investigation and disciplinary procedures of handling sexual assault and sexual harassment cases, as well as impede on the protections that Title IX insures; and,

Whereas(3): This change would force sexual assault and sexual harassment victims to file charges with law enforcement against the accused before the University can take any steps to protect them or can conduct internal investigations; and,

Whereas(4): According to a report by the Justice Department in 2014, only 20 percent of campus sexual assault victims go to the police given that victims are often assaulted by friends and partners, pressing charges does not seem like an option, many victims are afraid of not being taken seriously and/or being treated poorly by police, and that many victims do not feel like they can withstand a trial while taking classes and dealing with the emotional effects of the assault itself; and,

Whereas(5): Because H.R. 3403 forces students to consult law enforcement before the University can act, it is practical to assume that the fear of going to law enforcement will hinder the likelihood of the students seeking support from the University or potentially reporting the assault at all; and,

Whereas(6): H.R. 3403 is opposed by the Association of American Universities, which A&M is a member of, in addition to at least 220 major advocacy groups including but not limited to:
- Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
- Victim Rights Law Center
- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
- American Federation of Teachers
Therefore
Let it be
Enacted (1): That the Student Government Association, on behalf of the students of Texas A&M University, steps in and stand ups for victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment by denouncing H.R. 3403 and encourages the Texas A&M University System to do the same; and,

Let it be
Further
Enacted (2): That it shall be the official policy of the Student Government Association, on behalf of the student body of Texas A&M University, to advocate at the National level against H.R. 3403, especially but not limited to events such as SEC in DC, and any other lobbying opportunities that present themselves; and,

Let it be
Further
Enacted (3): As the official policy of the Student Government Association, the disapproval of H.R. 3403 also be discussed with other Legislative Relations affiliates from other Texas institutes of Higher Education by the Legislative Relations Vice President; and,

Let it be
Further
Enacted (4): That copies of this legislation shall be sent to-
- Members of the U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee
- The bill authors of H.R. 3403
- All Texas Congressmen and Congresswomen
- The leadership of the Texas A&M University System
- The leadership of Texas A&M University - College Station
- The Texas A&M Office of Government Relations