



Executive Action Sheet for Senate Legislation

Senate Bill 329-

Resolution 329-

I, Meghana Boojala, President of the Student Assembly of William & Mary do hereby:

Approve

Veto

The Student Assembly Senate Legislation:



Meghana Boojala

President, 329th Student Assembly (21-22)

DATE:

A Bill

To support students working against hate and striving for a more socially just and inclusive campus community.

The Counterspeech Working Group Act

An Act of the 329th Student Assembly of William & Mary,

Sponsored by Senator Zach Outzen (Law '22)

Co-Sponsored by Senator Allie Wallach (Law '23)

Supported by Will Wasson (Law '21), Nicholas Matuszewski (Law '21)

WHEREAS, over the past three years there have been multiple speakers invited to campus who are affiliated with known hate groups or who have otherwise engaged in hate speech while platformed on campus¹²³;

WHEREAS, these events and the administration's response to student concerns surrounding these events received negative attention in national media, harming the William & Mary community's reputation as an inclusive space⁴;

WHEREAS, despite these events, many students stood in solidarity with their community members to protest messages of hate and intolerance;

WHEREAS, when an organization exercises the right to free speech to platform hate against those from marginalized backgrounds, it is incumbent upon community members who believe in inclusion and equality to use their freedom of expression to stand in solidarity with their neighbors.

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court has best articulated that to counter the effects of hate speech, "the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence" (i.e. the "counterspeech doctrine.")⁵

¹<https://flathatnews.com/2018/11/13/law-school-talks-lead-to-protests-waggoner-mcglathlin-trigger-unrest-among-student-groups/>

² <https://abovethelaw.com/2018/11/law-students-captive-audience-to-racism/>

³<https://flathatnews.com/2021/02/22/law-school-event-featuring-religious-liberties-lawyer-kevin-snider-sparks-outrage-fundraiser/>

⁴<https://abovethelaw.com/2021/02/law-school-very-disappointed-in-students-speaking-out-against-designated-hate-group/?fbclid=IwAR28vWCVvGGKN2cj6jCP-UkUcGJOAwCYNch6ALozGdqost2zhayM00dJ-O4>

⁵ <https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/940/counterspeech-doctrine>

WHEREAS, there is a need to better understand how to support William & Mary's affinity groups when events like these occur.

Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Student Assembly of William & Mary:

1. Unequivocally reaffirms that LGBTQIA+ students are unconditionally welcome and cherished in the William & Mary community, and denounces any attempts to assert otherwise as antithetical to our values.
2. Recognizes its moral obligation as elected representatives of the William & Mary student community to continually strive towards an equitable and socially just campus environment, and to support student leaders using their platform to work towards the same cause.
3. Wishes to provide support and resources to students engaged in free speech intended to counter the effects of hate speech in our community.
4. Pursuant to **Article IV, subsection VI** of the Constitution of the Student Assembly, creates an ad-hoc student committee (hereinafter the "Counterspeech Working Group") to produce a report to the Student Assembly detailing how the Student Assembly can support marginalized students engaged in free speech countering the effects of campus hate speech.
 - a. The Counterspeech Working Group will be composed of between six to twelve students who are members of student affinity groups across the undergraduate and graduate campuses, or are otherwise qualified to provide perspective from marginalized groups.
 - b. At least one Student Assembly undergraduate and graduate representative will be a member of the Working Group.
 - c. The Student Assembly representatives will oversee the selection of the Working Group's members.
 - d. The Counterspeech Working Group will provide the report to the Student Assembly no later than the last day of the 329th session.
 - e. In its initial meeting, the Counterspeech Working Group will itself determine how best to pursue its goals and how often to meet.
 - f. If at any point in time the Counterspeech Working Group anticipates any difficulty in producing the aforementioned report, the Counterspeech Working Group will notify the Student Assembly in writing.