

UNIVERSITY of  
**HOUSTON**

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

**Label:** SGAB-60007

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**Author(s):** Pres. Rizk, Chair Ortega, Elect Comm. Astraquillo

**Sponsor(s):** Speaker Pro-Tempore Kadi, Sen. Rizk, Sen. Jaleel, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Dhanani, Sen. Onuorah, Sen. Ijaz, Sen. McClure, Chair Szell, Sen. Lubben, Sen. Ballesteros, Sen. Morehouse

**Committee:** Internal Affairs

**Draft:** Final Read

**Further Election Code Revisions Act**

**Whereas,** four weeks of campaigning is strenuous on the students;

**Whereas,** voter turnout still had the highest turnout in a period of three years despite the stated election period being cut short in Round 1 of the 2023 spring election cycle;

**Whereas,** the University of Houston has one of the longest campaign periods of any student government in the State of Texas;

**Whereas,** there is no correlation between increased voter turnout and an increase in the weeks of campaigning beyond the threshold of (3) three weeks;

**Whereas,** the staff of the Center for Student Involvement does not have the capacity and the human resources to install and maintain an in person voting location on the Sugarland and Katy campuses;

**Whereas,** an ample amount of time needs to be apportioned for the election commissioner to be appointed, in the case that the senate does not appoint a candidate in time;

**Whereas**, clarifications need to be made regarding accountability of supporters in complying with the election code and relevant university policies;

**Whereas**, incumbency advantage needs to be kept at bay within the confines of social media promotion and the repeated use of party materials;

**Whereas**, senator candidates should have democratic control regarding who holds the title of president and vice president within their parties after the filing deadline has passed;

**Whereas**, the University of Houston is no longer using Blackboard as one of its primary academic systems;

**Whereas**, a rank choice voting system goes to an automatic runoff to ensure that an extended voting period is not necessary;

**Therefore be it enacted by the Senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:**

**The following Sections will be added as follows:**

**Article 2, Section 3, Clause 1:** At least one member of the Election Commission must be present in a designated office for the Election Commission for at least twenty (20) hours each week.

**Article 2, Section 3, Clause 2:** If more than one member of the Election Commission is present for the same hour in the designated office, this only counts as one hour towards the twenty (20) hour total.

**That Article 2: The Election Commissioner, Section 1: Responsibilities, Clause 7** be amended to read the following:

“Clause 7. The Election Commission will commence the election on the second Monday in February and conclude the election at the end of the last day of voting”;

**Be it further enacted**, Article 2: The Election Commissioner, Section 2: Appointment, Clause 7-8 be amended to read the following: “Clause 7. The Deputy-Chief Election Commissioner will automatically become the Chief

Election Commissioner should the Office of the Chief Election Commissioner become vacant between December 1st and March 31st of any given calendar year.

Clause 8. The Attorney General will appoint, without confirmation, a Chief Election Commissioner should both the Office of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Office of the Deputy-Chief Election Commissioner be/become vacant between December 1st and March 31st.”

**Be it further enacted,** Article 3: Candidates and Parties, Section 3 Responsibilities of a Candidate, Clause 2 be amended to read the following: “Clause 2. Candidates will be held responsible for any activities by their supporters that are in violation of the provisions of this code if there is explicit evidence that supports that a candidate authorized or requested such activities or if evidence supports that a candidate had actual or constructive knowledge of illicit activities and/or authorized or acquiesced in such activities. Explicit evidence is defined as physical proof of the aforementioned activity. Examples include text messages, emails, videos, etc.”

**Art 3, Sect 5, Clause 1:**

“The Presidential candidate has executive authority over their party in terms of membership, composition, and name. The Presidential Candidate may remove members from their party at any time, for any reason. Such individuals will have the right to run as independents for any position they choose post-removal. A party without a Presidential Candidate will select a candidate to hold executive authority over their party in terms of membership, composition and name.”

**Be it further enacted,** Article 3: Candidates and Parties, Section 5: Responsibilities of a Candidate, Clause 6 be amended to read the following: “Clause 6. If a majority of a party wishes to remove the presidential and/or Vice-Presidential candidate nominee after the filing deadline has passed, two-thirds (2/3rd) of the party must vote in favor of removal and submit the names of those favor and reasoning for the removal to the Chief Election Commissioner for approval. If they want to remove the presidential and/or vice-presidential nominee before the filing deadline, the candidates in opposition only option is to form a new party.”

**Article 3, Section 6, Clauses 14 and 15 will be removed and replaced with the following: Art 3, Sect 6, Clause 14:**

“Clause 14. Candidates (regardless of party affiliation) may switch their position registration (for example, an independent Engineering Senator candidate may switch to running for President or Undergraduate At-Large) so long as they confirm this in writing to the Chief Election Commissioner and the change occurs before the registration deadline.”

**Art 4, Sect 2, Clause 1:**

“Clause 1. All campaigning is subject to the authority of entities or individuals that have jurisdiction over the location in which campaigning is occurring and the University of Houston Student Code of Conduct. If any complaint is filed concerning whether campaigning in a certain building is permissible, the filer must prove a prohibition on campaigning within said building is (1) in writing and (2) well-communicated to students/candidates before the alleged violation took place.”

**Include the following without replacing Art 4, Sect 2, Clause 9:**

“Clause 9. No candidate, or authorized representative thereof, may distribute or make available any campaign material prior to the commencement of the campaign period. This section will also apply to the creation and availability of any website, social networking group, or other online campaign tool.”

**Art 4, Sect 2, Clause 10:**

“Clause 10. No university academic system, such as Canvas or Microsoft Teams, may be used to promote, aid, or advertise any campaign. This includes mass emails to students.”

**Be it further enacted, Article 4: Campaigning, Section 2: Prohibitions on Campaigning, Clause 11 be amended to read the following:**

“Clause 11. No university academic system, such as Canvas, may be used to promote, aid, or advertise any campaign. This includes mass emails to students.”

**Be it further enacted, Article 4: Campaigning, Section 3: Campaign Materials and Endorsements, Clause 2 be amended to read the following:**

“Clause 2. All physical and non-physical and campaign materials, including but not limited to: Flyers, Social Media, Stickers, Buttons, T-Shirts, etc., must be originally created, and cannot be reused within a 5 year period. This does not include party names. Nonphysical materials such as social media may not be reused.”

**Art 4, Sect 3, Clause 5:**

“Clause 5. If a student group chooses to endorse a candidate/party, the candidate/party will not be held responsible for activities of the endorsing student group in regard to activities which are intended to physically, mentally, or emotionally inhibit a candidate or their party; ~~unless there is explicit evidence of a candidate directing the aforementioned behavior.~~”

**Be it further enacted,** Article 5: Voting, Section 3: Polling Locations and Regulations, Clause 2 be amended to read the following:

“Clause 2. The Election Commission shall host an in person voting option on the University of Houston main campus.”

**Be it further enacted,** Article 5: Voting, Section 5: General Election Results, Clause 1 be amended to read the following:

“Clause 1. Candidates running for President and Vice President must receive a majority (50% +1) of the votes cast to be seated. A Presidential candidate without a Vice Presidential candidate will run against all others who have a complete ticket.”

**Be it further enacted,** Article 5: Voting, Section 6: Determination of Results, Clause 2 be removed.

**Be it further it further enacted,** Article 6, Section 1 be amended to read the following:

“Clause 1. Candidates running for a Student Government Association Senator as an independent candidate for a specific college shall be limited to campaign expenditures totaling no more than the previous December’s equivalent of five hundred (\$500) dollars in January of 2020 determined by the US Government CPI Inflation Calculator ([https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)). Confirmed and announced by the Attorney General.

Clause 2. Candidates running for a Student Government Association At-Large seat as an independent candidate shall be limited to campaign expenditures totaling no more than the most recent equivalent of seven-hundred-fifty (\$750) dollars in January of 2020 determined by the US Government CPI Inflation Calculator ([https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)). Confirmed and announced by the Attorney General.

Clause 3. Political parties and Independent Presidential candidates shall be limited to campaign expenditures totaling no more than the most recent equivalent to one thousand-two hundred (\$1,200) dollars in January of 2020 determined by the US Government CPI Inflation Calculator 19 ([https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)) for the entire party. Confirmed and announced by the Attorney General.”

**Be it further enacted,** Article 6: Campaign Finance, Section 1:

Expenditures, Clause 12 be amended to read the following:

“Clause 12: All donations both tangible and intangible financial or non-financial, must be disclosed on an individual’s or party’s donation list and counted as part of their expenditures, limited by the campaign expenditure limits. All nonfinancial contributions/donations to an individual or party (this includes but is not limited to: printed materials, signage, t-shirts, etc.), must be assessed a fair market value and included on both the weekly donation list and the financial disclosure form. Any funding an independent candidate or party uses to finance their campaign must be accounted for in the weekly donation list.”

**APPROVED**

Benjamin Rizk

Benjamin Rizk  
Student Government President

Date of President's Approval: 1-31-2024

Sophia Wilson

Speaker Wilson  
Speaker of the Senate

Date of Senate Approval: 1-31-2024

